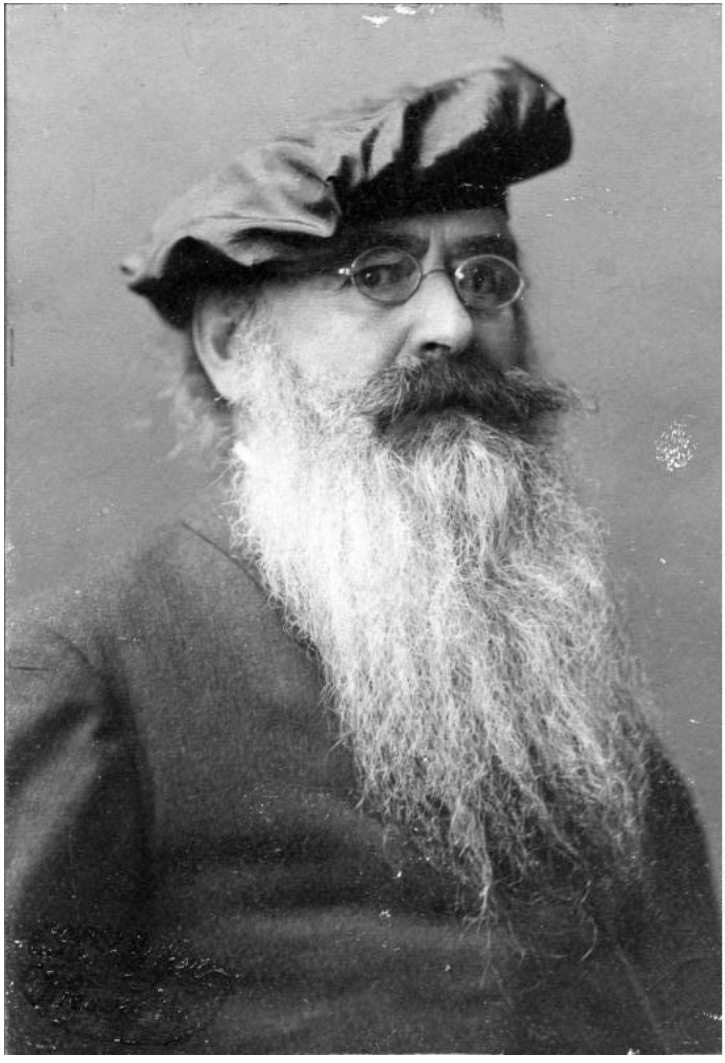
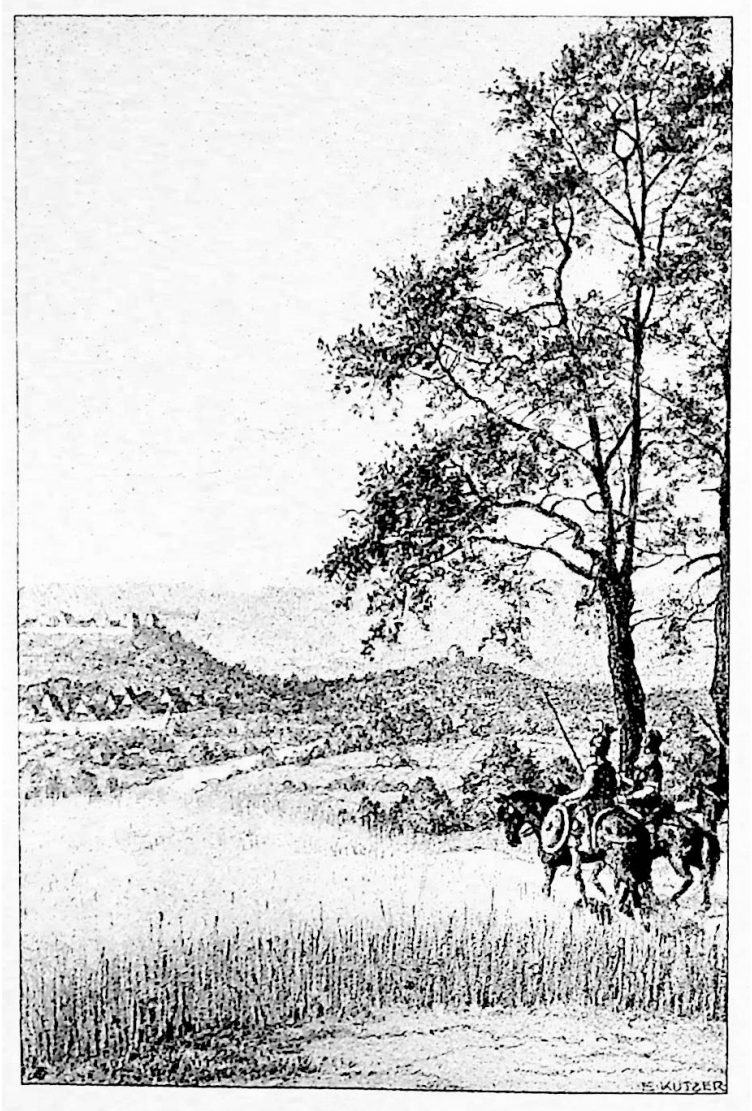


Pipara, Volume 1
by
Guido von List



Rome's envoys before Eburodunum [Brno].
Book 1, Chapter 1, Page 1

Pipara

Preface to the First Edition

The novel "Pipara" is set at the time of the so-called "Thirty Tyrants" in the second half of the third century of our era (250-300 a.d.). After the extinction of the imperial tribe of the Julii with the death of Caesar Nero, none of the Caesars who followed succeeded in founding a new dynasty. In the now incessant struggles of individuals and entire dynasties for the Caesarian Purple, it was gradually stripped almost completely of its majesty and became a plaything in the hands of violent adventurers and low people of the most precarious sort, so that even men of great intellectual talent, whom fate had allowed to ascend the Roman imperial throne, likewise fell victim to this curse and were only able to achieve a small fraction of what they could have achieved in a different time. The human desire to establish a dynasty, to bequeath the title of Caesar to their descendants, hindered their measures everywhere; they were only able to half carry out their best-intentioned plans and before the threatened empire could clearly realize any advantage from their orders and creations, the steel of a journeyman murderer had already forcibly created a different situation. Things were at their maddest during the reigns of the emperors Licinius Valerianus and Gallienus, under whom no fewer than thirty-three pretenders to the throne arose, who almost simultaneously feuded as counter-emperors and finally

deprived the highly gifted Caesar Gallienus of his throne and life, without, incidentally, restoring peace and stability to the Roman Empire, which had been shaken at every juncture.

This terrible period in the insane history of mankind is mildly transfigured by a noble female figure, like a bright star of hope above a desert wasteland. This sublime female figure was the golden-haired daughter of the Marcomannic king Attal, the noble German Pipara, the first German empress of Rome.

Emperor Gallienus, seized by the most ardent passion for the beautiful German king's daughter, took her as his wife under the name Cornelia Salonina and elevated her to Roman empress as Augusta.

Although this marriage - in modern terms a “mesalliance” [part marriage, part alliance] - was a heart-warming idyll of love on the decrepit Roman imperial throne, it could not be rejected from a political point of view either, for Pipara's father, a powerful Marcomannic king, kept faithful guard on Rome's Danubian frontier, and Pannonia and Noricum were thus the only provinces where peace and security prevailed. Rome would have had every reason to gratefully acknowledge these and many other advantages which could be attributed to the German empress, and would have done so decisively, had not that same Rome been most grievously wounded in its excessive pride and self-conceit by the fact that she was a despised barbarian who, as Augustus, shared the Caesarian Purple with Gallienus.

Before this marriage, Rome had enthusiastically recognized Caesar Gallienus' merits, but after its consummation it persecuted him beyond the grave with the most ardent hatred. The emperor’s court knew only too well the danger of this situation and tried to deceive the people of Rome by pretending that Pipara was only the emperor's concubine, while Cornelia Salonina Augusta was a Roman patrician, a relative of the emperor. As well-intentioned as this deception was, it did not catch on; the "dear Quirites" did not believe it and only calmed down when the entire family of Caesar Gallienus had fallen at the hands of murderers.

It is highly interesting to follow the description of these events by the five Roman historians Aurelius Victor, Trebellius Pollio, Eutropius,

Zosimus, and Zonaras. Today there is a politically-slanted daily press, and in those distant days the same was true of the annals and historical literature, which were likewise divided into official, unofficial and oppositional groups. The contradictions between these five historians regarding Pipara are remarkable and can only be explained by their partisan positions. However, they all unanimously praise Pipara's beauty, her golden blonde, rich, unusually long curly hair, as well as her decisive influence on her imperial husband, as a result of which her spiritual and mental merits are also necessarily recognized. The only mysterious question is whether Pipara and Cornelia Salonina Augusta represent one or two people.

The discussion of this question gave the author the initial impetus for the creation of his latest novel, in which he argues that the German king's daughter Pipara and the Roman Caesar Cornelia Salonina Augusta were one and the same person.

Based on historical facts, Guido List came to the conclusion, recognizing in the German king's daughter the rightful wife of Caesar Gallienus and therefore also in her the first German empress of Rome[1]. In his poetry he now unfolds an equally touching picture of the unfolding of the first naive love of the simple child of nature for the experienced Gallienus and lets this love grow stronger in the maiden's development into a wife in a perfect painting of the soul; he describes the course of her education to become a Roman domina and finally, with the full force of tragedy, the lion-wild love of the wife and mother, who fights with berserk rage for her beloved, and when husband and children lie murdered before her, she boldly kills herself to save her honor. This novel is the high song of German female loyalty and, as gruesome as it closes, the noble figure of the unadulterated German woman reconciles us again and again with the tragedy of fate.

The wallpaper from which this tragedy stands out is interwoven with masterfully drawn cultural-historical descriptions and downright enchanting

[1] Strange! - Pipara was - according to today's political classification - a German-Austrian, just as the first two German kings of Rome, Odovacar (Odoacer) and Dietrich of Bern (Theodoric the Great) were also German-Austrians! - Strange!

atmospheric landscape images, which, however, never stand out in a doctrinaire way, but always form only a suggestive background to stylishly frame the painting.

Of course, nowadays there are more and more of the highly wise men who call themselves the "moderns" and who accuse the historical novel of all sorts of dangerous things, who smell historical falsification everywhere in favor of poetic tastiness and therefore decry the historical narrative form as - “falsified poetry” - and, moreover, even seriously consider that because the writer of the story had never been present when such things were supposed to have happened, his writing should be regarded as nothing more than pure fantasy, and thus generally not sufficiently distinguishable from what is rightly called a lie according to all forms.

That such a suspicion of historical poetry is at the very least a prejudiced view and misjudgment of the facts, if not a malicious slander, is clear from the comparison with the noble art of painting, which one would then logically have to deny "historical painting" as - mere representation!

And then, apart from the contemporaries Felix Dahn, Gustav Freytag, Wilhelm Jordan et al, the Iliad, the Odyssey, the Song of the Nibelungs, the Song of Gudrun and many other poems that we value as pillars of world literature would have to be discarded at a stroke, because their authors, from Homer's father up to the minstrels and beyond, were not present when the events they sang about took place; and even the moderns do not think of shaking these iron monuments in their sleep.

It would be clipping the wings of Pegasus, if like an old castle moat, the poet's right to unrestricted space were to be curtailed, if his unrestricted territory were to be bounded and customs barriers erected, guarded by grizzled customs officers with the obligatory plaited wig.

But such opinions of the moderns are never to be taken particularly seriously, because, according to credible signs, it seems as if the time is already fast approaching when people will understand how it is decidedly more useful for the German people to hear stories of the heroism of their powerful ancestors instead of pathological discussions about the sexual aberrations of their degenerate contemporaries; which sad events are more

suitable for the dissecting table in some clinic than for the reading table of a German women's magazine.

And so the song of Pipara, the first German empress of Rome, is recommended to the German reading world for its benefit.

Vienna, February 1895

The editor.

Preface to the Second Edition

Displaced by the parties' favor and hatred,
The portrayal of his character wavers in history;
But art shall now bring him to your eyes,
Bring him closer to your hearts in a human way.
Schiller: Wallenstein, Prologue.

It was still in my days of Sturm und Drang when I, mostly alone on explorers' paths, visited our ancient Wuotan sites and sought to solve the great sphinx-like riddles they offered my senses. No topography, no historical memory or tradition offered any explanation, except that here and there a timid folk tale gave an inadequate hint or a half-forgotten custom pointed the way back to the uncertain twilight of ancient times.

Comparisons with other regions proved to me that we in Lower Austria have not only the most numerous, but also by far the most important such sanctuaries, and this must have its reasons, but - where were these recorded and why was the time that created such great things forgotten?

The answer to these questions could not be found for a long time, because no printed book contained it and older works left me completely in the lurch in this respect. It was only gradually that the unholy ground I was treading gave me the solution to the riddle in the form of an enormous runic lore, as I have described in detail in the "Deutsch-Mythologische Landschaftsbilder".

Naturally, I also looked to history for an explanation of the ownership rights of the land during the period of Roman rule along the southern right bank of the Danube and, among other border shifts between the Germanic

tribes and the Romans, I also came across the ceding of territory in Upper Pannonia, which the Roman Caesar Publius Licinius Gallienus had agreed with the Marcomannic king Attal in the year 260 of our era. I continued my research, as the cursory, superficial information contained in our contemporary historical works was not enough for me, and so I delved into the Roman writers themselves in order to obtain clarification from the contemporaries of Caesar Gallienus and King Attal.

So I read those five Roman historiographers one after the other, among them "Zosimus" (I. 30), "Zonaras" (Annal. XII 24), "Aurelius Victor" (Caes. XXXIII), "Trebellius Pollio" (Salonin. 3.), and "Eutropius" (IX). But what I found there gripped, and indeed shook my mind to the core. After these studies it was clear to me why the Romans later persecuted the initially idolized, energetic Emperor Gallienus with the most furious hatred, hated him irreconcilably far beyond the grave, for he had unspeakably wounded the vanity of the Romans by marrying a Germanic, i.e. a barbarian woman. -- I soon saw through the court party's plan to deceive the Romans by adopting the Marcomannic king's daughter Pipara into the imperial family and elevating her to the position of Roman dominatrix as Cornelia Salonina, and to split Pipara into two personalities, whereby the Marcomannic Pipara was to appear as the emperor's concubine and the dominatrix Cornelia Salonina as his wife; but the plan failed. Irreconcilable hatred pursued the imperial couple to their mutual bed of fire and beyond that into the realm of oblivion. Those five annalists were on the one hand the linguistic tools of the Romans' wounded pride, on the other the spokesmen of the court party, and hence their contradictions, their exuberance in hatred and favor, in blame and praise.

Once again, the main thing had grown out of the incidentally found secondary matter and this was "Pipara". This time, however, I was primarily fascinated by the real, pure, Germanic woman, as glorified by Tacitus in his "Germania", while the story of the "Thirty Tyrants" - there were actually thirty-three of them! - which is why I only let them appear in the background, like wallpaper, so to speak, while the Germanic woman as a girl, as a virgin, as a bride, as a wife, as a mother and finally as a Valkyrie-like

avenger and self-destroyer in voluntary sacrificial death and through this as a self-divinizing Armanin as I imagined her in her full divine glory. In the figure of Pipara I gave the ideal image of Ario-Germanic female fidelity and female virtue, and the novel "Pipara" is the high hymn of praise to the Ario-Germanic woman. In this hymn of praise to the Armanen woman, however, the counterpart is offered to the distorted female image with which our hereditary enemies want to destroy us by demonizing the goddess-like Germanic woman as a Medusa in their suffragette mega-army.

But just as the Marcomann Pipara was portrayed differently by the five Roman historiographers mentioned above, divided into two personalities, namely the Germanic Pipara, the concubine, and the Roman Domina Cornelia Salonina Augusta, the wife of Caesar Gallienus, while both personalities were only the one, Pipara, the emperor Gallienus himself - "disfigured by the parties' favor and hatred" - was also praised and blasphemed, raised up and ridiculed in the most contradictory ways.

Without originally intending it, the archetype of my poetry grew out of these insights into the motives of those partisan portrayals of the imperial couple Gallienus-Pipara, forming itself ever more densely and finally entering the world as a novel.

However, I would now also like to make a few remarks here about the art form of the historical novel, as I would like to see it understood.

The "historical" or "epic" novel stands out as a very special genre from the groups of poems in free language, which are called "novels" or "novellas" according to their structure, and which in a certain sense means the same thing to contemporary literature as the epic was to the age of minstrels. If the modern "epic in prose", the "historical novel", now finds it difficult to occupy this position in contemporary literature and finds it even more difficult to maintain it, then the cause of this strange phenomenon lies in the mistrust that today's literary world already has of the "historical novel". This mistrust is based primarily on two cardinal points, which in turn are based on the great difficulties that the author of such poems, if he is serious about his art, faces in solving the highly serious tasks he has set himself.

The historical novel makes far greater demands on its author than the

novel whose fable is borrowed from the present, because, like the latter, it is supposed to offer a true picture of the time in which the action takes place, and therefore requires a very wide range of knowledge from its author. For this reason, the author of a historical novel must have a thorough knowledge of the history of the time from whose events he wants to work on this or that case as poetry, and indeed from all the source works accessible to him, possibly contemporary ones, in order to summon all parties and contemporaries before his judgment seat like a conscientious judge, in the sense of the fundamental sentence: "world history is the world court", to hear them and to render the verdict of truth and justice through his poetry and its result. He must therefore no less have recognized and grasped the intellectual life of the time to be portrayed in all its currents, in order to know what stirred the passions at that time, what made hearts beat faster, or was taken for granted as indifferent, in order to portray people of that time and not those of today: in order to look at the epoch to be portrayed with the eye of its time and not with that of today, to judge it and to shape it accordingly. In addition to this main knowledge, he must also be well-informed in the seemingly most trivial matters, and all the auxiliary historical sciences, such as ancient geography and philosophy, myths and legends, moral history, religious studies and religious history, folklore, linguistics, costume and weaponry, etc., etc. Nothing must be too insignificant, for him to treat with the conscientiousness of a learned researcher. Nevertheless, he must control his force, he must apply all his knowledge only modestly, he must not show it obtrusively, but use it only like a painter uses color, seemingly playfully, so as not to harm the poetry by scholarly ballast.

Apart from the fact that the author of historical novels must indeed be a scholar, it is always demanded of him first and foremost that he be a poet, that he grasp his knowledge with all the fervor of a poetically gifted and gifted seer, that he see with his soul's eye the images to be created, that he senses their moods with the soul's sense of touch and then shapes them, not as mechanically forced conclusions, but as truly seen, truly felt atmospheric images, which must be artistically formed, the transfigured reflections of the

historical theme; beautiful, poetic in form, true from within and without.

But since poetry and scholarly research are seldom in complete harmony in the historical novel, since either the scholar excels over the poet or, conversely, the poet prevails over the scholar, the mistrust of the historical novel is not entirely unjustified. If one may judge these errors with a certain leniency, especially in cases where one is convinced of the honest intention of the author, there are, however, other moments which require a harsher judgment, indeed a condemnation in the most unsparing form, in order to fight for and preserve the historical novel's representative position of being the epic of storytelling in contemporary poetry.

First and foremost there must be the demand that the poet recognize and follow exactly the same laws for himself to which he would be subject if he were working as a historian; he has no right to shift actions, events, to rewrite them and to impose other tendencies and guiding concepts on an epoch, a historical personality that are alien to it. He must carry out the fable strictly in accordance with his theme: if the tendency of this theme does not suit him, let him choose one that corresponds in tendency to his views, for he has no right to do violence to history and its facts, because as a poet of historical novels he administers the sacred office of a judge in the court of the world. The so often abused "Licentia poetica" may only extend to incidental - in the historical sense - embellishing accessories and must absolutely remain subordinate to the eternal law of truth. The poet must strictly balance the historian, he must not tamper with the events of the subject matter, but it is the task of his art to shape his poetry in such a way that the historical truth remains unimpaired and the often very brittle material is entwined and spun around by his poetic talent in such a way that a masterpiece of poetry nevertheless emerges without having done violence to the material. Only the bungler, the poet poor in imagination, will dare to reach with a clumsy hand into the tangled web of the story, in the stupid delusion of putting it in order while it is being torn apart and confused.

Only a few historical poems from older times, in which those laws were not yet so clearly recognized, may, in view of the immense greatness of their high poetic power and beauty, make us forget their historical mistakes and

preserve their high, classical value undiminished and imperishable, for every time, every art movement has its own laws, its own measures.

But when a historian, a scholar who lacks any poetic talent, constructs a historical novel on the basis of forced reasoning, so to speak according to mathematical calculation, the result is a poetically unproductive miscellany, like Christoph Wagner's Homunculus, a hybrid monster that cannot live and cannot die.

If these two varieties of the historical novel are to be judged differently, they can still be excused by the honest intention of their authors, who were only denied the power of ability. But when incomprehension and ignorance go hand in hand with poetic incompetence and the structuring of the material, when complete helplessness in the structure of the episodes and the development of the plot are pitifully revealed, when, despite such sad helplessness, and indeed in a full sense of his own powerlessness with his own unique power, which he copied from famous and popular narrators, an ink-wasting poet nevertheless dares to write a historical novel, and has the impertinence to offer such a misconstruction, which is not even capable of becoming a homunculus, to the uncritical public as a serious creation of art, then the guardians and preservers of contemporary epic prose poetry, the caretakers and promoters of the historical novel, are faced with the duty of the strictest opposition. But if such an unfortunate bungler's work has as its ultimate purpose the deliberate falsification of history, and indeed the purposeful falsification of history, in order to have a stultifying, stupefying and confusing effect on the people under the guise of historical fiction, in the service of certain cliques and parties, then the guardian and preserver of historical fiction must both, as well as anyone who honestly means truth, honor and justice, must take a stand against such unscrupulous falsifiers, against such literary vagrancy and criminality, and nail them to the well-deserved pillory as and where he can, so that the news of their deeds may resound through the land in order to mitigate the damage they have caused as far as possible.

The office of the poet is a noble priesthood, a teaching office in the noblest sense of the term, and anyone who has the temerity to stand up as a

false prophet, as a deliberate falsifier of the truth, as a false teacher, is guilty of a sin against the Holy Spirit, a sin which dogmatically even the Pope in Rome is not allowed to absolve!

Now that we have identified the content and form of the novel "Pipara" as justified, some attention should also be paid to the setting of its plot.

The novel takes place in Pannonia, Noricum and the Marcomannic Empire, in Dacia, Dalmatia and Rome, as well as in some overseas countries, but only in episodic side events, while the main events - apart from Rome - took place in the territory of present-day German-Austria.

That is why the novel "Pipara" is first and foremost a

German-Austrian novel

And - with the exception of my novel "Carnuntum" - in general

The first historical novel from Austria's prehistory,

In other words, a highly patriotic work.

And following on from this, I believe I cannot refrain from repeating my political creed at this point:

I am an Ario-German, a German, an Armanen poet, and - if an even more precise description were necessary - an idealist-German who does not profess allegiance to any political party and cannot be claimed as a supporter of any such party, whatever its name. As such an idealist-German, however, I never forget that I am Viennese, German-Austrian, Markomannen, and I believe in the German national spirit as in a god! My German-ness is my religion!

However, if today's German-Austria at the time of the third century AD is the main setting of this novel, then full attention was also paid to this in the illustrations, in that the places where the events described in the novel took place are shown in their present form by means of numerous picture inserts, in order to connect the present with the distant past. For example, Kutzer's picture, "Rome's legation before Eburodunum", shows a reconstructed view of Eburodunum [today's Brno] from the year 258, and the view of Brno today is intended to enable a comparison between then and now. Similarly, the place where the funeral pyre of the centurion Gemellus

was burned in Meliodunum (Olmütz) also appears in the picture in its present form. Everywhere the connecting threads between the past and the present are drawn in text and pictures, so that the reader can visit the areas in question with the book in hand and find everywhere the current location where the ancient events described took place. I believe I have thus met a fair requirement for a historical novel.

In this regard, I would also like to express my sincere thanks to friends who supported the illustrated second edition of my novel "Pipara", namely Dr. Hermann Haaß in Berlin for his charming architectural and landscape photographs from Salona, Spalato and Rome. Mr. Theodor Knaute in Olomouc for the cityscapes of Olmütz he made available to us, and no less to the art publishers of Mr. Reiffenstein in Vienna (Carnuntum: Arena) and Mr. P. Ledermann in Vienna (views of Brno and Stillfried). We would also like to thank the exemplary chemotypes of the art sheets of the academic painter Mr. Ernst Kutzer, the k. K. Hofchemigraphen Herren Angerer & Göschl, as well as for the proven typographical services of the Oberösterreichische Buchdruckerei- und Verlagsgesellschaft in Linz.

And so you too, Pipara, rise from the shadowy realm of the past and are summoned by me to regain the almost lost Armanen ideal of womanhood and to unite it with Armanen strength, just as Dr. Johannes Faust once summoned Helen from the realm of the mothers to marry the Greek ideal of beauty with Armanen strength:

"*Ye Mothers, in your name, who set your throne*
In boundless Space, eternally alone,
And yet companioned! All the forms of Being,
In movement, lifeless, ye are round you seeing.
Whate'er once was, there burns and brightens free
In splendour — for 't would fain eternal be,
And ye allot it with all-potent might,
To Day's pavilions and the vaults of Night.

Vienna, Easter 1913.

The author.

Brünn [Brno], the ancient Eburodunum. Book 1, Page 1. Reproduced with permission from Kunstlerverlag P. Ledermann in Vienna.

Guido von List

First Adventure

How Pipara was Kidnapped

That was now more than sixteen hundred years ago. The midsummer sun stood glowing in a cloudless blue over the undulating hills, from which flowed that peculiar fragrance which the sun's glow brings forth from the golden grain when it ripens for the sickle. Red flowers shone out of the golden seed, as if they were gazing lovingly at the sky-blue cyan, but dreamy and still, as if in Sleeping Beauty's magic castle.

Above the wide fields of corn rose a mighty castle on a hill with defiant towers, and next to it a lower hill castle, also crowned with ramparts and towers; but between these two hills, behind high ramparts well protected with posts, wattle and daub, stretched “Eburodunum”, the lively royal city of the mighty king Attal, ruler of the Marcomanni and Quadi.[1]

Inviting and cool, darkly forested, rocky mountains rose in the blue distance over the lower hill country, between whose stony reefs a sharp eye can easily spy the valley gates that open up the interior of the country. Eburodunum was like a faithful guardian in front of the king's treasure house.

A sultry pre-thunderstorm calm lay over the land, and not a beat of wings nor a bird's song interrupted it, not a breath of air stirred; even the dust rested as if tired on the amber road.

[1] Eburodunum is today's Brno, the name is derived as follows: "eb" (ab, ap) = to come forth; "ur" = Ur; "odun" = divine spirit; thus meaning: "Emerged from the divine spirit". The current German form of the name "Brünn" came about as follows: Eburodunum - Eburodun - 'b'ro'un - Brünn. The high castle is today's Spielberg, the one beside it is today's St. Peter's Cathedral. Both were temple sites; the former dedicated to Wuotan, the latter to Donar. The Germanic tribes fortified their temples and used them as forts in times of danger. Otherwise they were uninhabited; only the holy women (priestesses) lived at the sacred sanctuary.

A troop of horsemen was moving along this road towards this Eburodunum. Weary and covered with sweat, the horses dragged themselves, unable to keep up a short trot; the dust cloud rolled heavily behind them, as if it too were tired. A glittering gold snake had glided toward the cavalcade, but then nimbly scurried sideways into the seed field; its mark, however, had been left behind in the dust of the road like a sacred rune.

The foremost of the horsemen had seen this, stopped his steed and turned backwards. He was a Teuton, but those who followed him were Romans. The procession was completed by several other Teutons.

The Teuton cradled his head meaningfully and said: "Heilo, Romans! Not everyone receives the Serpent Queen's greeting, great fortune is heralded by this event! For our happiness and yours, you are doing your trade with the king! Only now does it please me to be your escort!"

The Roman gave a short, sullen reply, then they rode along in silence for a while. Midsummer heat parches the throat and makes one reluctant to consume superfluous words, unless a large jug of drinkable water can be found within arm's length.

But the Marcoman rider could not get the snake sign out of his mind. Whoever the serpent's queen crawls out by herself to meet has great things to do, but the leader of the Romans did not look like the kind of man who could do such things. There was indeed one riding behind them, among the last, who seemed to be more important than some troop servant, but sometimes the eye deceives; - and yet- ! The Marcomann addressed the Roman again: "Tell me, Roman, what business brings you to the King in Eburodunum? You could have spared yourself the ride and had the emperor’s letter delivered!"

The questioned man answered gruffly:"Quade, if you want to know - "

But he interrupted: "Don't always say Quade, Roman![2] You should know and also realize that we Teutons who hold a horse between our thighs are called Marchmen or Marcomanni; but those who walk on foot and carry spears are the Quades! We are the leaders and they are the folk! Remember

[2] From March, Mähre, Pferd; not from Mark = border.

that! Now then, what is your trade in Eburodunum?"

The Roman had a mocking look for the bear-skinned nobleman and replied pointedly: "So Marchman; you're supposed to be hunting patricians? Listen! In the last war we never found time to have our beards shorn, and that is why we are riding to your king, so that he will lend us his beard trimmer and have a bath prepared for us, along with everything that goes with it!"

The Marchman was not particularly pleased with this answer, for he had noticed two things that made him wary. Firstly, it was clear to him that the Roman did not want to tell him anything, but secondly, he had noticed that a rider had ridden up in the cavalcade to listen to the conversation, which was not usually the manner of the cavalrymen. A peculiar smile played under the broad blond beard of the Teuton and a mischievous, scornful look flashed from his blue eyes at the Roman as he began: "You are well advised, Roman; we Teutons wield very sharp shearing blades; we also know how to set up baths and give a good washing! I think this summer has given you enough of an example. And your great victory before Ravenna -"

"Silence, you blasphemer! Why did you run away from that battle?" With this word of anger, the rider from the cavalcade interrupted the Marcomanni's speech, clenching his fist angrily. ----

"When an eagle speaks, the ravens are silent," said the Teuton and added: "You should ride back to your troop; you see the eagle painted on my shield here as a sign that I belong to the royal clan; I will only speak to your leader!"

The rider remained silent, but a look of hatred flashed across at the Marcomanni. But the Roman who rode in front said: "Marcomanni, we are all Romans and everyone can speak as he pleases; don't be mistaken".

Many an unfriendly word flew back and forth between the two, but as the contents of their canteens had been emptied or spoiled by the heat, they soon fell silent, as clear proof of what a solid quencher of arguments a thirsty throat can be.

Snorting and puffing, the horses stopped in front of the fortifications of Eburodunum, behind which the closed gates were hidden. Then the

Marcoman sounded a cry from his horn. The gatekeeper answered in kind. Then the guard leaned over the wickerwork of the walls and asked: "Who wants to enter King Attal's castle and the city of Eburodunum? What are Romans doing in the land? This proclaim!"

“I'll tell you that, Blackmouth, when I have the third horn of mead in my belly! -- Open up!" shouted the Marcoman rider impatiently to the gatekeeper. But the gatekeeper growled back: "Three spears, and not three horns, shall feed your guts; why are you leading Romans into the country?"

"Since when has it been the custom at King Attal's court - you Neiding - to keep out the guest? Do you not see the eagle on my shield? Is Hanold the Burgrave of Stilifrieda so unknown to you, croaking puff? Open at my wrath!"

"That's someone else's responsibility!" returned the one on the rampart. "Wait for the king's word!"

The gatekeeper had disappeared; only patient waiting was of any use, and so the riders did. Soon a new horn call sounded down from the rampart. It was the king himself; Marcomen knew the bugle call well.

"Greetings with disfavor, cousin Hanold! Why should you bring us Romans? They belong to the wolves along with the one who leads them! What is their honor?"

"Message and letters from the Emperor of Rome! But cousin King, I am withered from the heat, if you want to ask more, at least send me a few jugs of mead!"

The King laughed and gave the order to open the gate.

In front of the courtyard under the broad linden tree, the arrivals were welcomed and then given a bath.

Dudar, the Hausmeier, the household steward, was given the task of looking after the Roman guests, which was not as easy as he had been ordered to do. But he soon figured out what to do. The two noblemen were to be given a small bower in the round tower, like a beehive, which was still standing from the old castle, for the new buildings were square and generally made of tree trunks. The retinue was to be accommodated with the castle servants in the large dormitories as best they could.

But now that the Romans had been settled, the Hausmaier also set about furnishing the round room comfortably. The walls were draped with red-colored cloths, the floor covered with wolfskins, while fragrant hay was piled in two places and covered with selected bearskins, promising to make the most splendid night's lodging for the weary riders.

Into this hall the Hausmaier now led the two Roman leaders, refreshed by the bath, but they still asked Dudar to send them the man who called himself Titus. This was done.

King Attal sat under the great linden tree of the castle, with his cousin, Count Hanold, beside him. Each held a huge drinking horn in their hands. In front of the king, however, stood a heavy jug on the broad oak table; otherwise they were both alone. They held secret counsel.

"What does the Roman want?" asked the king. "When the wolf gets too active, he steals a calf or already has one."

"Very true and wise!" laughed Hanold. "They seek your alliance, cousin King, against the Gothic lord Ostrogotha, or they want to recruit nations again to strengthen their legions. At least that would make sense to me."

He said so, and emptied his horn, as a man of understanding does when there is no server at hand; for he had not yet put it down from his mouth, when he already reached for the jug, so as not to forget to pour.

The king, too, had thoughtfully emptied his meadhorn to refresh his mind, then he wiped his wine covered blond beard and continued: "You did try, cousin, during the ride here, to lay snares for their secrets? Surely you are otherwise well versed in the bird's hearth, and that includes nets, snares, even sticks of glue".

"That goes without saying! But there's still a lot I don't know. See for yourself, Cousin King, how I investigate; the good fowler only pulls the line when he is sure of the catch."

"That is to say," Attal said thoughtfully, "that the Romans will say different things and want different things; lies and deception are the Roman way and will remain so as long as there are any."

"Well, they say that if you see the wolf first before he sees you, then there is no danger to worry about." He had heard this in Stilifrieda, and then

leaned broadly in front of the large jug, like a city dweller who takes his intentions seriously.

Then he saw a lovely picture, at the sight of which he almost forgot the barely half-empty jug.

In the little tree garden of the castle, into which the guest could see through the branches of the linden tree and other bushes without being seen himself, walked two lovely girlish figures, apparently engaged in serious conversation. What they were saying was out of earshot, and Hanold wasn't even thinking about listening now, because the looking had made him forget about both the listening and the drinking.

The two girls, however, were the little girl Pipara, the child of King Attal, and her playmate Walburgis.

How the two girls had blossomed so handsomely! Pipara with her rich golden hair, which fluttered around her royal figure like a cloak and almost touched the ground. The golden-haired girl was tall and proud like the fir-tree on a rocky cliff, whose branches are wreathed in the gold of the brightest morning ether, and her soft fairy-blue eye was unfathomably deep, like the blue of the sky; and yet she was sweetly mild, like Freya, the lovely one herself in the soft glow of the flickering moon.

Walburgis was also tall and slender, blue-eyed and blond-haired, and yet - what a different image of a girl!

She lacked Pipara's magic charm, the proud calmness of the fir tree; she would reminded us more of a poplar tree, just as cuddly, just as flexible, just as rustling.

Thus the two girls stood together so alike and yet so unequal, united by the bond of unselfish friendship between the playmates of youth, which only loosens when the deeper, more serious, but even sweeter love for a man takes possession of a maiden's heart.

Hanold had forgotten about the tankard, for the thought had crossed his mind that it was probably time to give his castle Stilifrieda a landlady; Pipara, his little bird, would have pleased him. In order to grasp this pleasant thought, he had immediately taken a long drink of remembrance and stroked his broad blond beard, which concealed a friendly smile.

"That, my good, dear Pipara, you shall know at once!"
Book 1, Chapter 1, Page 11

But this did not last too long, as the Burggrafen von Stilifrieda's face stretched noticeably.

This was because he had now overheard some speeches that made him eager to hear more.

"And today, where are the guests in the castle, why so dreamily dull?" Walburgis had called out, and added cheerfully, "Flutes and violins will call us to the Ringelreigen, singers will harp and sing, the Romans will dance with us, and your cousin Count Hanold ---."

But Pipara turned away unwillingly and huffed: "Shut up about him!"

"You want him to be your husband and you his housewife in Stilifrieda? I always hear it said that way, or is it different?"

"That's the truth," returned the king's child angrily, "but I'll never be his spouse! What can I hope from a man who has been in the castle for so many hours now and is so entranced in front of his jug that he forgets to offer me a greeting?"

Walburgis wanted to answer. Count Hanold was about to hurry to his little bearcub to make up for the omission, silently grateful for the involuntary hint he had overheard. Then an event occurred which not only undid what Walburgis and Hanold had wanted, but also left the two girls and the casual observer speechless with amazement.

Two of the Romans had been walking up and down in conversation in front of the little garden of trees; they were the leader of the Romans and the rider whom Hanold had reprimanded today, the same one who called himself Titus. They had stopped, surprised by the sight of the two girls, and Titus seemed to be completely enchanted by the sight of Pipara. There was nothing strange about that, but it was obvious from the two of them that Titus was the one giving the order and the other was the one following it without a will. Soon the two of them were standing in the little tree garden and paying their respects to the girls, Titus addressing Pipara without further ado, leaving Walburgis to the other.

Here, too, Hanold could easily see which of the two Romans must be the more distinguished.

This gave Hanold pause for thought, and a feeling stirred in his heart that

resembled jealousy, or as close to it as one raven is to another. Then they came closer and Hanold listened to the conversation:

"And you say, royal maiden, not at all whether you return my love! This heart burns and glows only for you, a short sweet yes and you follow me over the mountains to my sunny Italia, where the wine glows in the grape vines and oranges and figs ripen, and where the gods live among men in an eternally green garden!"

"You can only tell me these things, stranger," Pipara replied, still affected by astonishment, "because you don't know our customs. You are my father's guest, but you may only speak to me when my father, the King, approves; go and return when my father is present."

But the Roman boldly wrapped his arm around Pipara, kissed her heartily and said, blushing: "When two love each other, they don't ask for long about father --"

But Pipara stamped her foot angrily and shouted: "Move away, insolent stranger, or I'll chastise you with these fists!"

But the Roman held the king's daughter all the tighter and cried: "Golden-curled Aphrodite! I am strong enough to hold you in my hands and defend your possessions against the whole world! I demand nothing improper from you, whom I want to make my wife!"

His deep black eyes burned in those of the girl, who was now less reluctant than before.

"You are mistaken, Rome-ling!" said Pipara with dignity. "The daughter of a Marcomann King may perhaps win your love, she may perhaps become your wife, but there are few who could say that they would take King Attal's daughter as their wife!"

"And if I were one of those few, my golden-curled royal child? Only for one of these few can Venus Urania have clothed you, my sweet, with this golden royal cloak."

With these words, he knelt before the astonished woman and kissed her golden curls with noble decorum.

"But you, Roman, can never be one of these few! Did you ride in here as a servant?"

Pipara said this with shy amazement and added:

"True, your noble nature is recognizable and distinguishes you even before the one who seems to be your master, but why the deception?"

"That, my good, dear Pipara, you shall know at once!"

With these words, the Roman rose from the ground and embraced the girl to whisper his secret in her ear. A heartfelt kiss sealed the communication without Pipara resisting any longer. The two left the square in secret whispers without Count Hanold having heard who the Roman was who rode in the rear and called himself Titus.

But even though he, the border commander against the Roman city of Carnuntum, was very keen to lift the veil that shrouded the true nature of the enigmatic Titus, other mysteries now weighed even more heavily in the balance of his actions, which seemed very likely to destroy his hopes of one day seeing Pipara reign as Countess of Stilifrieda.

He muttered something to himself that sounded like a threat, but as he reached for the jug in a hurry, it could be assumed that the threatening murmur was only meant for the forgotten jug.

King Attal had not noticed any of this. Leaning against the trunk of the Burglinde, his arms folded in his lap, Eburodunum's manly lord sat there with his head bowed, sleeping and snoring and no dormouse could be more comfortable and self-satisfied.

Count Hanold was pleased to see this. He crept out into the courtyard and ordered the horses to be bridled, which had recovered well after standing for several hours in warm water. Hanold also ordered the horses to be ridden to the pond and ordered everything that suggested a long, arduous ride. He still had to reach Stilifrieda today, was his answer when asked about the reason for the preparations, and this was clear to everyone.

The count had long since returned to his seat next to the king and in front of the jug, which was slowly but steadily emptying.

A horsefly must have tickled the King's nose a little more than usual, for Attal began to stir and beat the winged little enemy with his hands, as if he were wearing a helmet and a brim. The drowsy king muttered: "Feindio! - Roman dogs, nine feet high to the gallows!"-----

"I know of one called Titus; but grant him twelve feet!" Count Hanold had said this, then slapped his royal cousin on the thigh with the flat of his hand to encourage him and got up like someone about to take his leave.

The king cursed, for his thigh was burning him so badly that he did not immediately know whether he should first rub the sleep out of his eyes or his aching thigh. Yawning, he said: "You want to ride already, cousin Hanold? Stay until tomorrow and hear what the Roman wants. I feel as if a dream had warned me about someone called Titus."----

"That may be, cousin King. But I must leave. The fog is steaming from Wotan's Valley and bad weather is on the way; when it starts, it could be something. I'd like to be sitting relaxed, before that happens. Farewell to you."

"But farewell we sing!" said the King, looking into the jug. They drank from what was left in the jug, then Hanold and his men took their leave and trotted cheerfully out of the gate.

The king walked towards the courtyard with the empty jug.

The two girls stood together in the little tree garden. Attal gave them a friendly wave and then went into the Zehrgaden to order the Hausmeier to fill a new jug for him. Once again, Herr Attal sat under the linden tree in the company of his jug and several warriors to discuss what the Romans would or would not say and how to answer this or that question, provided that this question and no other was asked.

A long time passed like this. Twilight shadows settled over the land, even though it was not yet sunset time. The sun had still been shining brightly, the shadows had become smaller, but now the sun's glow had faded. The trees and bushes were shrouded in a leaden gray twilight and the distant mountains had become invisible. Above them, however, stood heavy weather clouds, as black as the thunderbolts themselves, with whitish glowing edges and an eerie, restless flickering in the background.

"When a thunderstorm is approaching, no sensible advice can be taken unless in the covered room of the hall, which is magically blessed against the violence of the evil weather!"

With that, the king rose from his seat and hurried to the castle, followed

by his men with their beloved jug.

But they had not managed to get under the roof dry. Large drops of rain cascaded down, and the storm was already there, howling and roaring. The first bolt of lightning flashed and was followed by thunder so loud it cracked. Now the weather was like no other.

"My cousin of Stilifrieda would be better off here than in the saddle," the king said, adding a drink and making a comfortable expression that showed how much he thanked fate for the fact that it was not he who was now in the saddle.

King Attal had probably guessed that his cousin Hanold was not yet in Stilifrieda, but he would never have dreamed that he was lying in the bush behind the next hill and letting himself get soaked, when he could have been much more comfortable in Eburodunum.

So the time had come when Mrs. Hildebirga's preparations in the kitchen had come to a prosperous end and she was ready to receive guests in the king's great hall.

On the cushions of the wide high seat sat the royal couple in their royal finery under a crown, to the right of King Gebhold were his first-born and Willahar the second-born, both younger than Pipara. The latter sat to the left of Hildebirga's wife, the queen. On both sides of the high thrones the seats were prepared for the Roman guests, while on the benches along the walls the seats were occupied by the men of the royal court. The queen's maids sat apart, as was the Germanic custom, for only the Gallic custom mixed both sexes at the table.

But the hall had also been festively decorated by Dudar, the housekeeper. Before, pine shavings and torches burned in iron lamps along the walls. Today, he had hung deer antlers in chains from the hall ceiling and decorated the ends with wax candles. He looked around confidently and took pleasure in the approving expressions of the royal couple as they marveled at his clever works and skillful deeds.

Then the guests entered the hall.

The king's marshal introduced them:

"Exalted king and lord of the Marcomanni and Quads! The two

emperors of Rome, Licinius Valerianus father and Gallienus son, send you a letter and a message through their legate Severius Silvanus and his exquisite entourage; they are waiting here to greet the emperors and present their business to you!"

With that, the leader of the Roman horsemen, the same one who had spoken to Hanold about the snake mark, stepped in front of the king's high seat and, after a deep bow, handed the letter from the two emperors of Rome to the king. The king welcomed his guests, had them seated and told them that, according to ancient custom, they should first be refreshed with food and drink before they delivered their message. Then, after eating the king's bread and drinking his wine, they would be under the protection of the sacred right of hospitality, and no matter how hostile their intentions, they would be sure of a free retreat as far as the Danube.

Severius therefore asked as a favor to be allowed to entertain the king in his hall today with a gift from his emperors, namely the fine wine from Cäcuba.

The wine was brought. Severius also offered the king, queen and their three children each a silver goblet as an imperial gift. The first cups circulated and were emptied to the prosperity of the friendship cultivated between the Marcomanni and Quaden kings and the emperors of Rome. The promise to continually provide the king with this noble drink greatly encouraged his inclination to make pacts with the envoys, even though he did not yet know what they would desire, for the Cäcuber tasted exceedingly good to Herr Attal. Frau Hildebirga also thought that the Cäcuber was a little more palatable than the home-made mead; the previous king of drinks had quickly lost the prestige that it had undisputedly maintained until that moment. ---

The Romans felt very satisfied with this victory of their wine and seemed to be in no hurry to announce the purpose of their mission; they obviously wanted to shape the atmosphere in their favor beforehand.

Outside, however, the thunderstorm raged on. The sea of flaming lightning could be seen through the open wind holes, and the furious rumbling of the thunder drowned out the speeches. The whistling of the storm also howled in. But the Yule log was glowing on the hearth, there were

solstice coals on the thatched roof of the hall, and on the ridge of the hall there was a stately six-pointed stag's antler, so you could be sure of not being hit by thunderbolts.

At last the men went to deliberate, and the women, preceded by the queen, left the hall after the tables had been carried out.

Pours went back and forth, with busy refilling of the empty drinking horns and cups of the drinking companions.

In a long speech, Severius had explained how the Alemanni had behaved ungratefully towards the always magnanimous Rome, how the Goths in Dacia had used armies, and how even the old friends of the Romans, the Marcomanni and the Quads of the Danube, had allowed themselves to be carried away to cross this old border stream. Even the Jazyge would have raided peaceful Rome again...

The king had reminded the eulogist of the “peaceful state of Rome” that the Danube Germans had never been friends of Rome since they had been neighbors for almost three hundred years, but the Roman did not accept this and insisted on the three hundred years of friendship. Then he started with what he wanted: Rome needed soldiers, Rome needed allies, Rome needed peace, in short, Rome needed a mighty mass of men to defend itself. King Attal granted that the Romans could solicit volunteers, but the conditions had not yet been determined, conditions under which he would recognize the Danube as the border of Rome and, as an ally of Rome, separate and fight against the Goths, Alemanni and possibly also Jazygen, when loud, frantic shouting was heard from the court, which seemed to be approaching the hall.

It remained quiet for a while; everyone listened towards the gulf. There was still lightning, but the thunder rolled less violently; the storm had lost its power.

Then the queen rushed into the gulf with a loud cry of woe, her robes flying, and behind her the maidens shrieked loudly: "Our Pipa has been stolen, kidnapped!"

This paralyzed everyone; Titus the Roman turned pale. The king struggled for composure; the wailing queen hung from his neck.

"King and hospitable friend!" cried Titus the Roman, beside himself with

grief, "dispose of us as friends, how and where we can help you to seek and find your child, you shall try our friendship."

But these words only seemed to inflame the king's anger.

"Romans, give me back my child!" he shouted in an outpouring of rage, and when he was told that no Roman knew or could know of Pipara's disappearance, Attal's lips turned pale and his proud body trembled.

But he fought down the fierce resentment, he conquered himself to appear calm, and then said with tremendous dignity:

"Romans, you are my guests and as such inviolable; not a hair of your head will be harmed, but you are my prisoners until Pipara is returned to me. Tie them up and take them to the dungeon one by one!"

Before the Romans fully understood what the king had ordered, they were bound almost without resistance and led blindfolded through the courtyard to the king's chamber.

There the housemaster took them over, tied them all together with a long rope and then opened a trapdoor in the floor, revealing a dark corridor leading downwards. Wielding a torch, he entered, dragging the Romans behind him by the rope. After the last one, the king closed the trapdoor again and threw the bearskin over it.

In the courtyard outside the horses neighed, the dogs made a noise and the men and huntsmen shouted in confusion; in between the sobs and wails of the women could be heard.

Investigations were to be made in all directions that very night in order to provide assistance to the kidnapped woman as quickly as possible.

The king himself was already in the saddle and indicated the exact direction he would follow in order to be able to receive immediate news if others were luckier than himself.

So it was off into the night for an eerie hunt for the king's daughter, with horses, hounds and all the hunting gear. Silent as a funeral procession, the hunting party moved out of the gate, but no cheerful bugle call, no hunter's cheer accompanied the companions.

The moon peered over the land through torn clouds.

Second Adventure

How Emperor Valerianus Schemed Against Ingenuus

The situation in Pannonia, and indeed in the entire Roman Empire, was terrible enough, even though this very Roman Empire had celebrated its thousand-year anniversary with grandiose pomp just a few years ago. Powerless, the Lord of the World, as the Roman emperors liked to call themselves, sat in the middle of the decaying empire, which even then seemed doomed to its fate. Surrounded by provinces that only belonged to Rome in appearance and whose ties with the empire were becoming ever looser as they fell more and more into the hands of the border peoples, who then had to be entrusted with the care of the borders, surrounded by rogue military leaders and officials who took every opportunity to put the imperial purple around their shoulders, the emperor of Rome, who still called himself "semper Augustus", resembled a helmsman on a rudderless wreck.

They were outside Mursa.[1] Emperor Licinius Valerianus had set up camp there. The Roman army consisted of legions that had melted together, poorly trained and poorly supplemented by gladiators and volunteers from all corners of the ancient world. In front of the camp lay the auxiliaries, or as they were otherwise known, the Hilfsvolk. They were a very dubious help, like a wolf that needs to be fed if it is not to devour the one from whom it expects food. Thus the emperor Valerianus lay before Mursa, which he wanted to besiege, but was almost as besieged in his camp by his own

[1] Mursa on the Dravus fluvius - today: Osijek (Deu: Essegg) on the Drava river. It is the capital of the Croatian region of Slavonia. It is located close to a confluence of the Danube and Drava river.

auxiliary. His son, Caesar Gallienus, who had put the Alemanni to flight before Ravenna and thus saved Rome from siege, if not from far worse, was approaching to bring his father the help he so urgently needed outside Mursa.

In front of one of the secondary tents near the imperial one, several legates and prefects were lying on colorful blankets in earnest conversation; they were holding council without intending to, because in serious situations in life, any unintentional conversation becomes a consultation as if by itself.

"If Ingenuus knew that we ourselves were the besieged here instead of the besiegers, then he would have more confidence in his Caesar Purple; one failure, and we are destroyed and there is no one who does not recognize him as emperor."

"You're very wrong, Regillianus!" exclaimed the legate Annius Corniculus. "You forget, prefect, that at the moment when a usurper triumphs over the legitimate head of state, a hundred others beside him breathe the same air, for that which is respected in the legal emperor, that which makes him Caesar Augustus, the nimbus of majesty, is missing in the upstart; stripped of divinity, he is a man like any other, and the next best man says: I too am a Caesar!"

"That's right, legate! Ingenuus must fall," said another.

"Not only fall, but be punished as a traitor!" Annius replied.

Then a centurion came and summoned those gathered here before the emperor, in his tent for the council.

There sat Caesar Valerianus in a rich field chair, in front of him on a small tripod table a bowl of fruit with a carafe of wine and the necessary cup.

At a hint from the grasping Caesar, the army commanders dispersed to the field chairs and awaited the imperial message. The speech from Emperor Valerianus was more than bleak. That Mursa's prefect Ingenuus had allowed himself to be proclaimed by the Moesian legion and had then assumed the Purple as well as the title of Caesar was known to all, as was the fact that he had thrown himself into the castle of Mursa with the Moesian legion, against the will of the citizenry, who were loyal to the Caesars Valerianus and Gallienus, hoping for help from them. But what was new was the news that

the Goths had been raiding Thrace and Macedonia, and had even made forays into the regions of Achaia and Asia Minor with sad success. New was the terrifying news that the Parthian king Sapor had invaded Mesopotamia and that the proconsul of Asia, Odenatus in Tadmor[2] , was apparently acting in collusion with the Parthian king. Seduced by his domineering wife Zenobia, he was now having royal honors bestowed on him as if neither Rome nor the Parthian war existed. Gaul, which was always prone to rebellion, also flared up with indignation; Rome had only the mutual jealousy of its commanders and military leaders to thank for the fact that no one there had risen to the rank of emperor, because no one granted the other the Purple of a Caesar. At the same time, however, the Alemanni prince Chroc raided into Gaul with impunity, destroying Divodurum[3] and Moguntiacum,[4] and individual troops had even reached as far as Hispania and Africa.

After the emperor had given this devastating report, he continued:

"And so I have decided, in agreement with Caesar Gallienus, to recruit even more Germanic auxiliary peoples. Germania produces enough men to supplement our armies, for every German who is slain in our service is a gain for Rome, because he is torn from those armies that hover over Rome like a threatening thundercloud, heralding ruin, plunder and destruction."

With the largest possible army, backed by the federal king Attalus, we throw down Ingenuus, then drive the Goths and the Jazygians out of the east, while part of the army tames Gaul. Caesar Gallienus is responsible for this. I have reserved the right to chastise the overconfident Sassanid Sapor, to triumph over him in Rome and to have a word with the insolent Odenatus at Tadmor. With the victory before Ravenna, a new glorious era of the millennial, eternal Rome can begin."

Much was now said to and fro; then a centurion entered the tent and announced that a messenger had arrived from the army of Caesar Gallienus.

[2] Today, as a ruined city, it is called Palmyra, Syria.

[3] Metz, France.

[4] Mainz, Germany.

"You mean to say, centurion," said the emperor with dignified calm, "that a messenger has arrived from Caesar Gallienus."

"Exalted Caesar!" replied the centurion, "as I said, the messenger was sent by Caesar's army and not by Caesar himself. May he appear to you, divine one? He has urgent matters to report; that is his word."

Then the aged emperor began to turn pale; trembling, he seized the gold goblet to take a refreshing drink, but the cup spilled much of its contents before it reached the emperor's lips.

"By the Capitoline Jupiter, what new fate will be heard? Roma, Roma --!"

The emperor shouted and emptied his cup, then stroked the crown of his head with the flat of his hand. But soon he had collected himself again; calmly and firmly, as if nothing had happened, he ordered the messenger in front of him.

He had entered and greeted the Caesar as usual.

"Who sent you?"

"The legate Aureolus, my emperor!"

"Why not Caesar Gallienus?"

"The godlike one has disappeared, no one knows where he is!"

"Don't worry about that, exalted emperor!" cried Regillianus with a barely concealed mocking smile, "don't worry, there is certainly a governess not far from the imperial camp who keeps pretty slaves, that's where you should look for the young Caesar, and that's where you'll find him!"

"Jupiter Ultor[5] shall reward you for your word!" Annius Corniculus cried out angrily. "Do not forget, Regillianus, that you speak from your emperor to your emperor; do not forget that he of whom you speak became the savior of Rome from Ravenna! Can you know the danger in which the exalted man is in, into which he has plunged for the good of Rome?"

But the emperor gracefully beckoned Annius to be silent and with the same silent gesture invited Regillianus to continue speaking; he continued, not without casting a triumphant glance at Annius:

"You know it well yourself, most exalted of Caesars, how your divine

[5] Ultor = the avenger, i.e. the avenging Jupiter. The Romans also knew a Mars Ultor.

son, Caesar Gallienus Augustus is wont to be. While Rome was trembling before its enemies, he, forgetting his princely rank, was hanging around in taverns and cookhouses, with matchmakers and musicians, and was the bosom friend of circus performers, mimes and gladiators! He hung around with dancers, singers and comedians, dined with them himself, and yet it is well known that he only goes out to the sound of a flute and returns home to the sound of an organ. It is also well known that..."

"Yes, it is known that your emperor Gallienus, when Rome was trembling and a certain Regillianus had cowardly fled, saved the empire by the glorious victory before Ravenna. Yes, Regillianus, that is well known, it is well known to all of us!"

Annius shouted this with a trembling voice and eyes flaming with anger. But again the emperor waved his hand, and Regillianus went on to tell how Caesar Gallienus was only ever interested in amorous adventures and had often saved his life with great difficulty, but had done the state irreparable dishonor. It had always made no difference to him whether he had embraced one slave girl in the cowshed, another while mowing the hay or a patrician's daughter during a banquet. But it was not he who dishonored her, for how can a scion of your illustrious house, most exalted, dishonor a woman, even a princess? - No - you have dishonored him, for..."

"Will you be silent..." Annius huffed, but again the emperor commanded silence without a word. Then the Caesar said to Regillianus with devastating coldness:

"Take a maniple of legionaries, Regillianus, and go to the posts in front of the camp. But don't forget to adorn yourself with the badge of a manipulus first."

Regillianus was destroyed; the emperor waved proudly. The fallen man staggered out of the imperial tent.

The others in the tent were also shaken and silent; the emperor, however, took a fruit from the fruit bowl, looked at it for a long time, then ate it with devout devotion, as if he had not the slightest interest in what had happened or in the messenger's report that had not yet been delivered.

But that was a well-calculated deception. The aged emperor used such

moments to collect himself and to observe his surroundings, while he himself carefully avoided betraying what was on his mind with facial expressions. Only the most powerful emotions could move him to express his feelings, as he had done earlier when the messenger reported the arrival of Gallienus' army. After savoring the fig, as one to whom nothing is above such pleasure, he beckoned the messenger to make his report.

He then told him how the army had moved from Ravenna via Aquileia to Emona[6] in order to branch off from there to Mursia. "But the dwindling army prevented this. Caesar Gallienus therefore advanced as far as the Danube, increasing and training the army along the way. They advanced as far as Carnuntum, where the emperor Gallienus was expecting new arrivals from the Quadenland. Many newcomers did indeed arrive. He explored the opportunities of their homeland with them over wine and then sent an impressive legation to King Attalus. The day after the departure of this legation, the emperor held a solemn council in the Hibernum Castrum at Carnuntum, gave a splendid banquet and then returned to the camp in front of the Marcus Aurelian colony with a large retinue. He went into his tent. The next day, when the emperor did not emerge, two of his most trusted satellites, Bonitus and Celsus, ventured into the imperial tent and found it empty. The legate Aureolus - for we had no camp prefect, as the emperor himself was on duty - immediately investigated, without success. No news has yet arrived from the legation either. Legate Aureolus, recognized for the time being as camp prefect by the other legates, asks for your orders, glorious Caesar."

The messenger had finished his report. Apparently calm, the emperor brought the goblet to his lips; his hand trembled softly. Then he said in a calm but hoarse, almost toneless voice:

"Prefect Annius Corniculus..."

The man called was stunned, but he stuttered sheepishly:

"Most Exalted! My rank is that of a military tribune..."

[6] Today Ljubljana, the capital of Carniola.

But calmly Valerianus said:

"Prefect Annius Corniculus, travel at once to the camp of Carnuntum. Confirm the legate Aureolus as camp prefect and search for the trail of your friend, my son...No other orders are necessary; act for the best of the state, be Roman, Vale!"

*****

The fallen prefect Regillianus had rushed senselessly into his tent and thrown himself onto his bed, foaming with rage. He had thought that the old lion's teeth had fallen out and had forgotten about his claws. He, the prefect Regillianus, was now supposed to be Manipulus! What a mockery! Why not an ordinary legionary? That was the only reason the emperor had left him this low rank, to let him recognize the height of his fall by it. He still wore the insignia of his former dignity, nor did any of his immediate surroundings know that this dignity had been taken from him. He summoned one of his centurions and ordered him to assemble the legion. The centurion hesitated to obey, so Regillianus summoned another. He and several centurions entered Regillianus' tent.

"You can all become legates and prefects," Regillianus addressed them. "The emperor is besieged by the auxiliary peoples, but he wants to play the besieger himself. Caesar Gallienus has been murdered. If we grant the auxiliary peoples their wishes, then Caesar was Valerianus - Caesar! We storm Mursia and give the nest to the auxiliary peoples to plunder; Ingenuus is captured and -"

"You are Imperator!" cried one of the Centuriones. "Your very name says that you are to rule Rome: Rex - regis - regi - Regillianus! Yes, Imperator Regillianus!"

"Thank you, Prefect Patroclus!" said Regillianus proudly; "from now on my name is Caesar Regillianus Illyricus semper Augustus!"

"Hail to you, Caesar Regillianus semper Augustus, hail, hail!" shouted the others.

The legion was already deployed and soon moved out of the camp to the

auxiliary peoples in front of it.

Valerianus' situation was desperate; one usurper in Mursia, one in front of the camp.

But Emperor Valerian had not lost his calm even through this event. Through reliable messengers, he had informed the citizens of Mursia of the danger the city was in and called on them to take up arms against Ingenuus; he would then stand ready with his legions to protect them.

This was the situation in Emperor Valerianus' camp.

******

Annius Corniculus, the newly appointed prefect of Illyricum in place of Regillianus, had arrived at Caesar Gallienus' camp outside Carnuntum with the lettered powers of Caesar Valerianus. The situation was still unchanged. Aureolus, who had now felt like an independent camp prefect for a few days, had also initially observed the imperial plenipotentiary with suspicion, as the idea of seizing supreme power with a swift coup had often crossed his mind. But he hid this desire deep within himself, for the time did not yet seem right. He also soon found that he had nothing to fear from the prefect Annius; the care the latter had taken to discover Caesar's trail to Gallienus made it appear to him that he was in no danger.

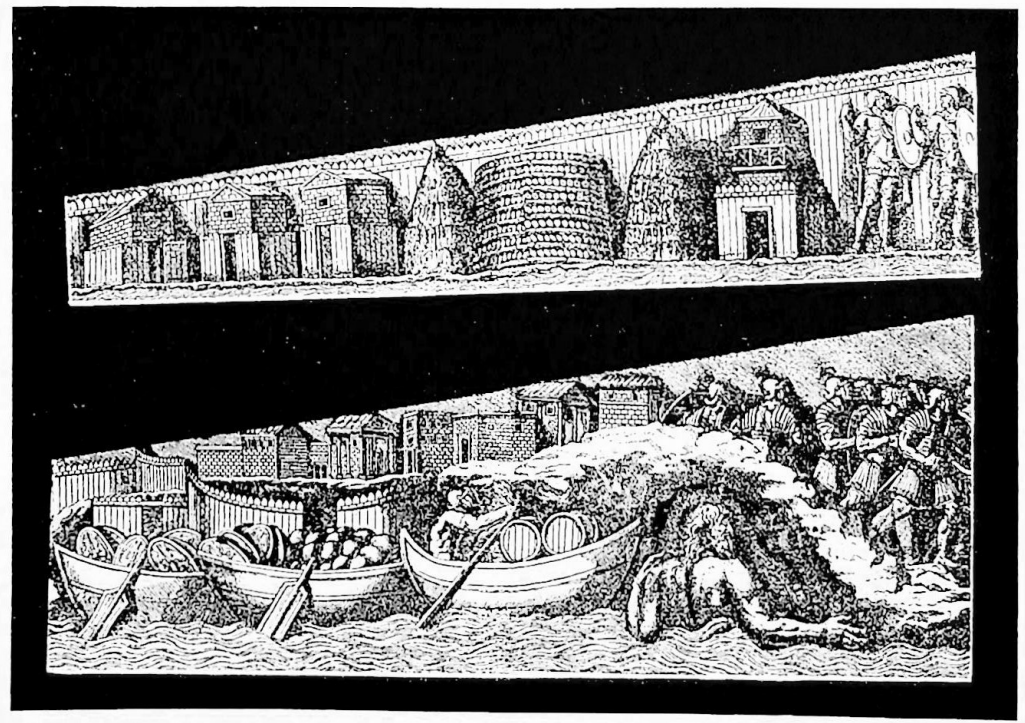
Annius had not yet finished his investigations when a passenger train arrived at the camp. Led by armed horsemen, three imperial carriages had entered the camp through the Porta Decumana; the leader of the horsemen ordered the sentry to immediately summon the camp prefect in front of the carriage of the emperor's niece, Domina Galliena.

Aureolus and Annius immediately rushed to the carriage; Domina Galliena was waiting for them impatiently.

The prescribed ceremonial greetings with which the two prefects wanted to receive the niece of Emperor Valerianus, the declared bride of Emperor Gallienus, were quickly cut off by the young Domina with the words:

"Tell me, gentlemen, what news of Caesar Gallienus, my fiancé?"

The young dominatrix had hastily blurted this out while tears streamed from her eyes.



The only surviving contemporary depiction of Carnuntum and the Roman guardhouses along the Danube Limes on the Antonine Column in Rome, from the end of the second century AD. Taken from the old copperplate engraving "Bartoli, Columna Antoniana." Book 1, Chapter 2, Page 24.

Now it is an inexpensive act to comfort a beautiful woman, but if she is also a princess, then this laudable beginning becomes a merit. The two prefects therefore did their best to comfort Domina Galliena. But all exhortations to leave the camp and set up camp in the Hibernum Castrum, Carnuntum's government palace, were in vain. With the stubbornness of a woman, Galliena took possession of the emperor's tent in order to conduct the inquiries from there. The wagons were quickly unloaded and the few female slaves Galliena had brought with her set up a tent for the princess. This was very unwelcome to both prefects. Aureolus found his plans for independence hindered, while Annius feared that the lovers' haste could jeopardize his plans to save the emperor, especially if jealousy were to interfere with this haste. However, neither of them let their unease be known, but each affirmed how happy he felt to have the princess close to him. But no one would have realized that the princess was nothing less than what she wanted to appear, namely a woman who was afraid for the man she loved. In truth, it was only the desire to shine on the golden throne of the Roman Caesar that made her afraid for the life of her fiancé, and that was why she had hurried to the camp and had only taken possession of the imperial tent in order to take the glory of an empress for herself. It was this glory for which she trembled, this glory for which she risked everything and would have given anything to secure its possession.

But the Roman woman, who was well-trained in all the arts of disguise, knew how to cunningly conceal her intentions and completely deceive even the two prefects.

Annius had reconnoitred the Germanic mercenaries with whom the emperor was drinking wine and questioned them about their conversations. Galliena had also heard this and demanded to hear them too.

A rich, throne-like armchair had been set up in front of the tent, raised on a sumptuous Parthian carpet. To either side, on tripods, were metal incense burners stained green, emitting their fragrant blue-ringed clouds; there were also small tripod tables with refreshments. Thus a place worthy of her was created for the imperial domina, from which she dominated the camp like an empress.

Wearing rich imperial jewelry, she sat in the cushions with compelling dignity, while the prefect Annius stood to her right and Aureolus, the camp prefect, to her left. The banners and vexilli of the legions were planted behind her seat.

Then Kadolt was summoned before the princess. He was a mighty, strong man, clad in bearskins, armed with a mighty shield and a massive spear that was never missing. He bent his knee before Galliena.

"Who are you, man?" the dominatrix asked.

"As you can see, princess, a Teuton. The emperor accepted me for military service with many of the friends I brought him, and he should not be sorry to have my Framea here" - he proudly raised his mighty spear - "as a friend. I have seen more than one man wriggling on this good spear."

"The emperor hopes great things of you, Teuton," said Galliena, "I was told that he honored you by drinking with you; what was your advice when he asked you for it?"

"Princess! That is a lie; the emperor honored me, but he never asked me for advice! You have a false report."

"So the emperor discussed something else with you, Quade," said Galliena, "and I would like to know that."

"Princess," replied Kadolt, "it is not worthy of a sword-swinger to tell what another confides to him over wine; it would be even more unworthy if I were to continue to tell what my warlord, whose servant I am, told me warmly."

The Quade glared defiantly at the princess, but she did not lose patience and continued in a gracious tone:

"That's how I recognize the Quade! But I want to show you that I also trust you; I also want to discuss a matter with you over some warm wine, but I also want to know that you are just as faithful to me. Bring a gold cup full of wine!"

Cora, the chief of the princess's slaves, brought the requested cup, which Galliena seized and drank to the Quaden after she had spoken these words:

"Kadolt, this drink is for you, the Wordkeeper!"

After a good drink, she handed the cup to the Quaden with the words:

"You may keep the cup as your own, it shall remind you of this hour!"

But the Quade refused and said:

"Princess, I can only serve one lord, I can only be one lord's wordkeeper. Keep the cup!"

But Galliena continued with unwavering patience:

"My good Kadolt, you misunderstand me! Take the cup and drink the drink of loyalty! Know that in the service of the emperor, who is threatened with grave misfortune, I honor your advice and your help. I will trust in your loyalty to Gallienus, your warlord, and tell you the secret of his misfortune. Then you shall help me with words and deeds to bring you everlasting glory!"

The Quade was defeated; he hastily grabbed the cup, waved it high and shouted:

"If it is so, then I will drink to you, princess, and you shall find no more faithful man than Kadolt, the Quade! Ask - and what I know and think and speak is yours!"

With that he put the cup to his lips, emptied it in one gulp and then kept it in his furs on his chest.

Aureolus had followed the conversation quite indifferently; not so Annius, who was worried that Galliena might learn things through the Quaden's communications that could arouse her jealousy, which would make the emperor's rescue more difficult, if not endanger it altogether. He sensed danger and was powerless to counter it.

"So listen, Quade! Your warlord, the Emperor Gallienus, has gone away. We are worried about him, for we do not know where he is going; we also do not know where he is now and whether he is well. Indeed, we fear that his life may be in danger or that he may no longer be among the living. We must bring him swift help, and that is why I have called you to keep your oath of allegiance to your emperor and to stand by him in his time of need. Therefore I remind you of your loyalty to your lord."

Galliena was agitated. Her eyes were impatiently fixed on the huge figure of the Quade; she wanted to read the answer in his face even before she

spoke. But the Quade remained calm, unlike before, when he had clearly shown astonishment and concern in his expression. Smiling, he said:

"Exalted princess! Don't worry, no accident has happened to the emperor, I know that for sure! He will soon be back here in front of his tent drinking the delicious wine with which you delighted me!"

The astonishment was now on the Romans' side and cast its own spell. Galliena seemed to have forgotten her dignity; with her body bent forward, her eyes staring and her mouth open, she marveled at the Quad; her right hand was still resting carelessly in the back of the throne chair, but her left was stretched out and reaching into the void. She hurriedly uttered the words:

"The emperor has entrusted you with this, speak, where is he?"

But the Quade said with unwavering calm:

"It was not the emperor who confided this to me; he cleverly knows how to conceal his plans. You, princess, have shown me the emperor's trail, and now I know through you where Caesar Gallienus is, just as I guessed that I showed him the way. But I also know that you cannot be his girlfriend, so take the cup back!"

But Galliena fought back and shouted:

"No, keep it! The time will come when you will see that I am truly the emperor's dearest! But tell me, you faithful servant, what the emperor is planning if you know! You see me, his bride, here in despair, you see me begging you, man, to give me rest from my concern for my dearly beloved! Tell me what to do to give me certainty!"

The Quade stood leaning indecisively on his spear, holding the cup in his hand, which seemed to burn him like an ill-gotten good. Galliena had jumped up and hurried down the steps of the throne. She stood in front of the Teuton, placed her right hand gently on his shoulder and gazed pleadingly with tear-filled eyes into the blue eyes of the man below. With a heavy sigh, the giant's chest heaved, showing what a difficult battle he was fighting. He avoided Galliena's gaze for a long time, but finally their eyes met and remained fixed on each other; redness poured over the Teuton's face

and ran into his rich blond beard and head of hair.

"By the clash of spears and shields!" cried Kadolt, "I have never been more fearful in the roaring battle's passage, but your tears, princess, have conquered me, your eyes, I believe, do not lie to me! Caesar Gallienus is in Eburodunum, in the court of King Attal!"

Galliena recoiled in shock: "Dreadful!" she cried, "and you're only saying that now? What can we do to save him?"

But the Quade laughed. "Now, princess, I really do believe that you are the emperor's girlfriend! He is in no danger, but a guest at the Quade king's court. The right of hospitality is sacred to the Teuton, and the emperor went there not as an enemy but as a friend. Be calm, princess, he will soon return here happy and cheerful."

"Don't tell me!" Annius cheered, forgetting all the laws of court etiquette. "Don't tell me, the incomparable man has put himself in danger in the service of the state!" Galliena cried, wringing her hands: "Yes, in danger! You, Prefect, said the right thing. In disguise, unrecognized, Gallienus joined the legation, that's clear, because otherwise people in the camp would know about his journey. Nor is it customary for an emperor to travel to a neighboring king without an imperial retinue. Moreover, the legation seems to have disappeared, for otherwise a message from it, if not the legation itself, would have to be here again!"

That made sense, and even the Quade was intimidated. Could the Romans have provoked the wrath of the Quade king? Then there would be danger. The Teuton had thought so. A pause of silence followed.

Then Galliena approached Kadolt. - Again she laid her tender, soft hand on the giant's sinewy armpit so that it trickled through him like a stream of fire, and again she lifted her tear-damp eye to his. But he no longer avoided the princess's gaze, but sank deep and ardently into her soul. Then the princess sighed, lowered her long black silk eyelashes and whispered as if from a troubled breast: "Kadolt, I want to ride to King Attalus, you be my guide! Will you, good Kadolt?"

He struggled again, but not for long, then he said: "Princess! I alone will ride, but if I have no horse, one will be found. But you must stay here! You

must not put yourself in any danger; indeed, if the emperor were in danger, you would increase it. Stay here and wait for me."

"I can't," breathed Galliena and sank to the breast of her nurse Menophila, sobbing loudly. This was a worthy matron, Greek by birth, and the confidante of her former milk-child.

"Child of my heart," she said, "calm down, the barbarian gave good advice! But now go into your tent and take care of yourself; you have at least lifted the veil of mystery a little, now let the men worry."

Galliena seemed to give in, but she approached the Teuton again and asked: "So, Kadolt, do you think you can reassure me about Caesar's fate?" Then she raised her silk eyelashes. A glowing gaze, like a bolt of lightning, shot from this fiery eye towards the Teuton's heart, then the long black eyelashes again veiled the longing glow.

"Stay close, I still need your advice," the princess whispered to him and then, after a quick farewell, hurried into the tent.

Annius now approached the Teuton and invited him to continue following the trail he had found in his tent with a full cup.

The two had not yet emptied too many cups, nor had they really warmed to wine, although the plan to ride together to Eburodunum had already been decided when a slave of Galliena appeared in Annius' tent with instructions to escort the Quads to the princess.

Galliena waited for the barbarian in a semi-sitting position in Gallienus' tent; he entered under the guidance of the nurse. She withdrew and let the heavy curtains roll down, and not a ray of daylight penetrated the room.

A precious lamp covered in rose-colored silk hung from the ceiling of the tent. Rose light flooded the room. Incense burners were steaming out all the fragrances of India, fragrances that the simple man of nature had never inhaled, that stunned and confused him. In the pillows, however, the intimidated Kadolt saw the grieving Galliena resting in tears; he recognized her and yet did not recognize her again. Was this really the princess? Where had her proud dignity disappeared to so quickly? Had she discarded her rich jewelry and gold-embroidered purple robes? Now she lifted her eyes to the

one standing apart, full and whole, glowing and sparkling like the desert sun. The Quade shook to the core.

"Kadolt, is it you who brings me comfort in my pain?" cried Galliena, straightening up as if startled by the intruder. Her eyes burned with a southern glow. Her right hand went to her forehead; blue-black curls curled up, and like unleashed snakes they rolled down over her dazzling shoulders. The folds of the light robe loosened, revealing an unprecedented beauty to the half-stunned Kadolt. But Galliena quickly shrouded herself as if she were frightened, rose hastily, rushed towards Kadolt, took him by the hand and led him to the resting place she herself had previously occupied. Unwillingly, the stunned man allowed himself to be led.

"My good Kadolt!" Galliena began, sinking into the cushions next to the Teuton and letting her eyes work their full fervor on him. "My good Kadolt, what are you thinking of doing?" And she played with the claws of the bearskin on his chest and wrapped her full white arm around the sunburnt neck of the Quaden in a dalliance. His mind grew sultry. "What do I intend to do, mistress?" He said no more, a fiery kiss burning on his lips. Two soft arms embraced him, then a golden goblet was offered to him, he gulped down the intoxicating drink and sank back into the pillows, covered in kisses. He had lost his senses.

When he woke up, he was lying on the grass in a corner of the camp; his brain was a mess and his head was burning. He got up with difficulty and dragged himself through the camp. Then he passed the imperial tent, a dark memory dawned on him, as if something had happened there, but it was not clear to him. He trudged on. Then Annius came towards him: "Salute Kadolt! On horseback, we will ride!" But in a dream he said: "Yes - ride! You mustn't cry! - Spear - and shield crash! - Don't cry!" Then he raised his arms as if to embrace Annius and staggered towards him. He backed away and the Quade fell to the ground, where he remained and fell back into a deep sleep.

Annius smiled bitterly; he knew where and how the Quade had been made so senselessly drunk. His memory of place and time and event was to fade! And this was Gallienus' bride, who only shed tears for the endangered

purple, but not for her missing fiancé! - He had the Teuton brought to his - Annius' - tent to have him guarded and healed.

Before Mursia, however, many things had changed. The three parties regarded each other with suspicious glances; Regillianus and the difficult auxiliary peoples outside the camp saw themselves without protection. He did not dare to take decisive action against either Mursia or Valerianus. The hesitation made his soldiers despondent, for they feared the wrath and punishment of Caesar Valerian, to whom they had so recklessly broken their allegiance. The pay also failed to materialize, and promises instead of ringing sestertii are a miserable thing.

A famine had also broken out in Mursia itself due to the close confinement; the emperor's best ally, for this spared fire and sword. The citizens finally gathered together; the starving legionaries of the Moesian legion also joined them and discussed what to do. The legion's debtors were still reluctant to surrender to the emperor, but it was agreed to send an envoy to him asking for mercy for the legion if it would return to its duty.

After much pleading, the emperor granted the petitioners what was now most welcome to him. On the same day, there was a loud clamor from the enclosed city; this was the sign of the uprising against Ingenuus. Then the emperor advanced towards Mursia; its gates opened. The citizens pushed out with their municipal officials to ask the emperor to take possession of the city.

When Ingenuus saw himself completely abandoned, he preferred voluntary death to execution and plunged the dagger into his heart.

The soldiers threw the still twitching corpse over the city wall into the moat, to be eaten by wolves, ravens and vultures.

Mursia rejoiced, for it was immediately supplied by the emperor with food; the Moesian legion was also welcomed back to grace.

Now Regillianus was trapped between Mursia and the imperial camp.

Fear and despair prevented him from making a plan; perhaps he could have been pardoned, but he could not make up his mind to do so.

Then his legates and prefects came before him excitedly and demanded that he act, for he had plunged them into ruin.

But helpless and despairing, he only uttered curses and complaints.

Then his prefect Patroclus approached him, reproached him for his shameful deeds and concluded with the words:

"You are not worthy of an honest soldier's death, not even of the ceremony of an execution; let your death be that of a mangy dog!" With that he raised his fist and struck the usurper down with it.

This happened in front of the legion.

Like a pack of beasts, the soldiers pounced on the prone man and tore his body apart beyond recognition. They threw him to where the mutilated body of Ingenuus lay.

During this riot, the emperor surrounded Regillianus' legion and forced them to surrender their weapons and insignia. A terrible judgment was passed on them. They had to march under the yoke without weapons, then all their leaders, from the centurion upwards, were beheaded, while the prefect Patroclus was stripped of his clothes, hanged and flogged until he gave up the ghost.

Every tenth man of the crew was beheaded and the rest distributed to the other legions, the standards and vexilli burned, for the legion had ceased to exist.

Caesar Valerianus now moved into the Hibernum Castrum Mursias, where he awaited further news about the fate of Caesar Gallienus.

The troops themselves, however, had little leisure, as the emperor kept training them to prepare them for the strike against the Goths.

Third Adventure

How King Attal Went After His Daughter

King Attal raced through the forest in a hasty chase. The storm was still whimpering around the cliffs, the forest groaned anxiously in the rushing impact of the wind, and the wispy clouds chased along as if in a madly surging flight. Only the moon stood still and let the wild, chasing clouds shoot past her, like a powerful spirit, like someone who wants to say: "What's the hurry? You won't get to the grave any sooner!" So the king and his men arrived at his castle in Blansegge[1] in the gray morning. His horn boomed angrily in front of the ramparts. Then it came alive inside. The hunting dogs and bear biters made a noise, then a commotion was heard, as if a large number of people were preparing to smash the skulls of uninvited guests in two. "What land-traveling people disturb royal peace!" shouted a threatening bass voice from behind the rampart. "Get lost, if you love your neck and head, hand and hair!"

"Open the door, Burgrave! Attal is asking to be admitted, your king!"

"What, by the gracious Gods of Victory, are you looking for here at this unusual hour?" exclaimed the burgrave, startled, and added: "Have the Romans broken into the country?"

The hut opened to admit the man's master. The hounds jumped around the king, for they thought it was a merry hunt, but today he had no regard for the animals' displays of joy.

"Call Voland, the blacksmith," the king shouted, "and take care of the

[1] Today Blansko by Brno

horses, they still have many a good ride to do today."

So the horses were unsaddled, put up to their bellies in the stable dung and staked inside, which was supposed to be good against lameness.

After a while, Guntahar the Burgrave came back to the king with an embarrassed smile and rumbled: "Voland, the blockhead, has told you, Lord King, that it is not the time for him to obey your word; if you want something from him, you have as far to the forge as he has to you. He knows what you want and can advise you."

"I could be angry with Gauch if I didn't appreciate him, he is an experienced man and can drink much mead!" The king said this and hurried to the smithy.

The forge was glowing there. Naked journeymen, clad only in their apron skins, pulled the bellows. A burly man in the same clothes, with a flame-red, shaggy beard and head of hair and bushy eyebrows that had grown together, rummaged around in the forge and paid attention to the king's entrance as if no one had come.

The king did not say a word either, for he knew what the "master of all masters", as Voland the blacksmith called himself, wanted, and such work had to be started and completed without shouting. Therefore the king was not astonished to find the forge blazing; after all, he had ridden to Blansegge because of the blacksmith's magic.

Now Voland had taken a horse's leg and put it in the forge and annealed it and hammered it and cooled it and annealed it again and hammered it again so that shreds of charred meat flew around and a burning fume filled the forge. He also annealed goat horns and acted as if he wanted to weld them to the horse's legs. He muttered spells and seemed to be talking to someone who was invisible to the king and whose speech was inaudible to him. - Herr Attal saw still more of such adventurous doings, for although he was aware that his blacksmith Voland, the "master of all masters," was practicing mighty magic, he began to feel almost uncanny. The blacksmith became more and more agitated; he spoke unintelligible words more hastily, as if he were in a violent quarrel with his invisible one. On and on he annealed, forged and cooled things that fitted the anvil like a Viking boat for

The king did not say a word either, for he knew what the "master of masters" wanted...
Book 1, Chapter 3, Page 38.

hunting hares. At last all these mysterious things were coaled together into vain black dust, which the grim man now poured onto a glowing iron plate, on which he quickly placed a second one. Now the hammer blows rumbled. He himself held the plates in his tongs and made the heavy blows with the small hammer. The two large hammers of the journeymen fell in a regular rhythm. The sparks flew and the blacksmith forged words of rage and diatribes into the iron, as was customary in the horrors of battle. It formed itself into a red-hot bar, which was then smashed into four pieces and a horseshoe was forged from each piece. Soon they were finished.

Then the king's horse was brought in and his horseshoes were put on. But none of them sat as usual; each one turned in a different direction. This, too, was done with many a horribly unintelligible utterance.

Now the other horses were led to the smithy and watered with the cooling water, but the smith offered the king a horn from the second cooling bucket. Disgust painted itself on the king's face as the blacksmith ordered him to empty the horn with a stern, commanding expression. With a shudder of horror, the lord of men put the horn to his lips and emptied it with the determination of one who brings the poisoned cup to his mouth. But the drink tasted less horrible than was to be expected; it was lukewarm and resembled a spicy mead broth. The king's followers had to drink the rest of the dubious cool drink asa final test.

They, too, emptied the horn offered to them while the blacksmith cast spells and made magical gestures. After this Voland threw the two cooling buckets into the forge, as well as many other things, whereupon he collected the ashes, put them in a leather bag without a seam and then tied it to the throat strap of the king's stallion's bridle.

When this was done, the blacksmith helped the king into the saddle and there, too, he had to knot and buckle the bridle in various ways. At last he was finished and said:

"Lightning and blue fire, King! Now ride after your daughter and you will find her. If your future daughter's husband has kidnapped her, you will find them both, but if he has not, you will only find him as a dead man."

The king turned to ask a question, but the blacksmith said briefly and sullenly:

"Unquestioned and unthanked, leave the magic-knower behind; more is denied him to say, to advise, or to do. Ride wherever the swift steed runs; towering reefs, wood-rich heights, rivers full of fish will help the journey!"

That was all the blacksmith had said; he had then hurried back to the smithy without greeting, the door of which he threw into the lock with a roar.

The day had already dawned when the king rode out of Blansegge. Where was he going? He did not know. He let his horse go; the others followed. Soon the forest had taken up the cavalcade again.

***

The castle at Eborudunum was not quiet today. By torchlight, the Romans' horses and packhorses were taken out of the stables, harnessed and loaded with all the prisoners' belongings and driven up to the sanctuary on the Spielberg. They were to remain hidden there for as long as their riders were kept as prisoners upstairs. This happened at the same time as the captured Romans were walking along through the underground passage tied by a neck rope towards an uncertain, bleak future.

Initially, the eerie passageway had lowered. The Romans had followed the tunnel into the earth's interior with their eyes closed and their steps uncertain. They were surrounded by musty air and dungeon chill; shivers shook their bones. Then the passage was more level, then it rose again in a steady slope. Staggering, they followed the direction of the rope to which they were attached. They soon realized that the passage was narrow and not very high, for if they bumped against the wall with one armpit and wanted to avoid the other side, one step was enough to run into the opposite wall. They were still climbing steeply upwards, the passage had not yet found its end.

"Keep to the wall on the right, maiden thieves!" called the bailiff in front, "it would be a pity for one of you if he fell into the well, he would be missing from the sacrifice at the next feast of the gods."

Fearfully, the bound men crowded to the right wall. Then they heard the sound of thudding footsteps, as if a plank bridge had been cut across an abyss. Those who walked gingerly over this bridge noticed how the beam vibrated with their steps. A damp chill played around their shivering limbs. Then they regained their footing and breathed a sigh of relief, as if they had already survived the danger.

This terrifying walk through the tunnel dug into the earth lasted many hundreds of steps. Then three heavy thuds echoed through the terrible darkness; they must have reached a door and demanded to be let in.

A few anxious moments passed without the door being opened or any other answer being given. Then there were three double blows, which also rolled unheard, as it seemed, through the interior of the earth. They had died away, nothing could be heard but the anxious, gasping breaths of the prisoners. After a long pause, three blows thundered three times through the underground rooms. These nine blows could no longer be fist blows, only a club could produce such thunder.

Then a woman's voice was heard from behind the beam, asking:

"Who is admitted to Helia's realm at this unusual hour? Who will cross the thunder bridge of the black fountain of death? Who will enter through the gate through which no one will leave?"

Then Dudar, the household steward, answered:

"It's men from Rome! They are under serious suspicion of having stolen Pipara, the golden-haired girl. They are here at the king's command; nothing is missing but their freedom until proven guilty or innocent. Keep them safe, but free from gangs and fed royally! Once their innocence is proven, they will return through the golden gate and may drink the drink of life from Frau Hulda's fountain of youth. Open up Albruna, by the king's command!"

Then the bolts creaked and the hinges of a gate screeched, the sound of which announced that it was a rare event whenever they opened. Behind those who had entered, the gate closed again with a roar, and the eerie hike began anew. It was no longer uphill, however, but the corridors they were walking through must have been many and winding. Finally, after they had passed through many doors, a larger hall seemed to surround them. They

were told to wait and the rope was taken from them. Then each of the Romans was led individually into a special chamber and locked in there after they had been freed from their shackles and the blindfold removed from their eyes.

There they found everything they could wish for, a soft bed, mead and excellent food, and each of the chambers was well lit.

No one knew anything about his companions, no one knew whether it was day or night, no one could tell the time, for deep, unchanging night lay over them all.

The enigmatic Roman who called himself Titus also lay in the cushions of a niche, as his underground chamber was known. Another niche contained a good tankard of mead. A lamp lit the room.

Desperate, he rolled on his bed. Trapped! Far from all the help of his own, trapped! Trapped, where the most precious thing on earth, the most precious thing that the mocking gods had given him, perhaps to snatch it from him forever in the hour of finding it, needed his help so much! What a dreadful mistake to treat him as an enemy, him, who could set half the world in motion to search for the stolen treasure!

In a rage, he struck his fist on the numb rock in which his dungeon had been dug; the powerful blow hurt him, but the rock made no sound, as if it were mocking the man who had fallen.

"Father!" cried the prisoner in the frenzied pain of abandonment, "Father! Before Mursia you await my approach, and here I myself lie helpless! And no one will want to believe that I, the emperor, had to go with you to watch over those who are supposed to be the pillars of the state! But I had not dared to let them go, for instead of the alliance of friendship, treachery would have been spun, like that of Ingenus or Odenatus! Father, what danger your son Gallienus has put you in!"

And again the unfortunate man tossed and turned desperately in the pillows. Then he jumped up and hurried through the narrow room. In the hour of danger, thoughts chased each other. Caesar Gallienus stood still, laughing derisively. Yes, it was he himself who called himself Titus, he was Caesar Gallienus, the emperor of Rome.

Mocking laughter echoed through the narrow room so that he himself trembled at the sound of it.

"You thundering Zeus!" laughed the emperor in a fierce rage. "You Capitoline thunderer! This time it was not Hermes but Momus who was your messenger." And again the emperor laughed harshly and shrilly. "Yes, it was Momus. Galliena, dear bride, how you will lament that you will not become empress! Yes, you will lament, but only for the purple, not for me! If your Gallienus has disappeared, then you will be the first to give your love to a prefect, a centurion, a gladiator if you must, in order to lure him to reach for the purple with a hand dripping with dirt! One small, very small murder, and Caesar Valerianus will have lived, and then he will have died!" And again he laughed brightly and wildly. Then he paced up and down the room again.

"Father, father!" he cried in a soft voice, and tears stood in his eyes. "And now, just now, when a short blissful dream has shown me a woman who alone is worthy to grace the throne of the Caesars, now, just now I must dwell in Tartarus! And you, the golden-curled one, when the goddesses, the Graces, protect you, when you return safely to your father's hall, will you still remember me? Will you confirm the words of Tacitus, which he speaks of the Germanic woman?"

Sobbing loudly, he sank back into the pillows of the camp. Confused images, sometimes hopeful, sometimes fearful, swirled around his soul. Then he reached for the tankard; one draught emptied it. His senses became confused, and a leaden sleep descended, snatching the unfortunate man from reality. - - -

***

King Attal had ridden well. He had rock-solid faith in the magic of the "master of all masters", and whoever has such faith in the success of a project will also lead it to a successful outcome; whether such faith is called trust in God, self-confidence or faith in magic.

So the king rode out of Blansegge and headed towards the sun. The sky was clear blue, the shadows in the rocky walls were violet-colored, from

which the dark blue forest stands looked down. A pack of wolves came running towards the king.

"Heilo, Master Isegrim!" shouted Attal joyfully; "I will reward you for your good start by granting you and your clan peace today! The arrival of a brave animal in the morning before a daring activity heralds good fortune. Heilo, comrades, keep a sharp lookout!"

On we went towards the sun, along a rugged, narrow winding valley. There, a companion from afar first found the track of a red trotter:

"Look, Lord and King, someone rode there a short time ago! The horse trot is easy to read in the rain-soaked ground; if he had ridden there before the weather, the rain would have covered it!"

"He could not have meant any good," said the king; "only hunters ride in Odin Valley,[2] for no road runs through it; and I am the lord of the hunt here. So get on with it!"

They continued along the trail.

The path became difficult for the horses; they trotted at a walk up the scree slopes. Then, turning around a rocky outcrop, a rider became visible within shouting distance. It was Hanold, the burgrave of Stilifrieda. His steed was worn out, and his appearance showed that he had made an arduous ride. But what the king had hoped to see behind the rider, Pipara, was not confirmed. This disappointment weighed heavily on his mind. He wrenched his horn and gave an angry, thunderous shout.

It was only then that Hanold noticed the king behind him; terrified, he threw his horse around and desperately spurred it on, but the tired animal stumbled and fell. Hanold was quickly surrounded.

"Give me my child, shameless knave!" cried the king.

But Hanold laughed and said:

"Cousin king! I am betrothed to her, and I thought I would keep her safe from the Roman servants. She is in good hands; when the Romans are out of the country, then you shall have her to entrust to me. Until then, cousin king, be well!"

[2] It is still called this today; the arid valley then flows into this valley further up, with the Macocha Gorge between the two.

Without bothering to look after his horse, Hanold made a side jump, quickly jumped over a few rock steps and was thus safe from pursuit by riders. The pursuers were quickly out of their saddles. With the exception of the horse guards, the king led the way and the entire retinue rushed up the rocks after the fugitive.

"Give me my child, and I will grant you freedom and oblivion!" gasped the king.

But the fugitive laughed and called back mockingly:

"You may go and find her, your Pipara! She is safe here nearby. She can't escape and you can't find her; I have thus ensured my own freedom. Farewell till we meet again at the wedding!"

And again he led the way; the hunters and the dismayed father followed him, panting and cursing.

Wild crevices towered up, surrounded by dark pine trees; many a hunting call had been heard here, but probably not yet for nobler game than today; you don't hunt a burgrave every day.

Then the summit was reached; the strong figure of the burgrave was still standing there among the pines, his blond beard and flowing hair playing in the wind, and he waved cheerfully to his pursuers.

Then underground thunder roared, the mountains swayed, the pines on the summit next to Hanold beat against each other like reeds moved by the wind; Hanold staggered like a drunkard, then he let out a bloodcurdling scream and then - a thick cloud of dust enveloped the mountain. Thunderous crashes shook the earth, rocks collapsed, others gaped apart like a tree split by lightning, a whimpering and moaning ran through the forest, then it was quiet again, like after a raging battle.

Petrified with horror, the witnesses to the ghastly event stood there, unable to utter a word or make a move.

But there, where Hanold had stood, there, where only a moment ago the wooded mountain ridge had curved, there yawned a gorge of gruesome depth. - The wind had blown the dust away. - The horrified king was now

able to see the place where the earth had swallowed his cousin Hanold. Slowly and carefully, the men ventured to the edge of the ravine.[3] It looked gruesome enough. A terrible chasm had opened up, gaping like the primeval abyss of Ginnungagap. Torn-off rock walls formed a funnel of immeasurable depth, overhanging rocks lined the top. Various cave passages stared out from the torn rock walls of this horrible chasm, which had lost their connection due to the sinkhole. The king had only once seen something similar somewhere on a war campaign, where a ruined Roman fort stood. Part of the building had been destroyed, and the half-standing structures stared into the void as suddenly as the interrupted cave passages here. The more Attal looked, the more terrified he became; no matter how hard he looked around, there was no sign of Cousin Hanold. Here and there, wedged between the debris of the cliffs, was a battered forest tree, its roots at the top. Deep down, however, there was nothing to be seen but dust-smoking rubble.

Then the king threw himself to the ground at the edge of the ravine in wild pain and cried out like a frenzied man:

"Hanold, Hanold, give me back my child!"

But Hanold gave no more answer; once the earth has swallowed him up, it will never let him go.

Then one of the men approached the king, shook him by the shoulder and said with coarse good-naturedness, "Lord of men! He down there has forgotten how to answer, it's just as well that he told us that the king's child was hidden here somewhere. Let us ride towards his scent, and we will find the dungeon where the maiden is hidden. Come, then, King, we must make haste, before the horse tracks are lost."

That was good hunting advice. The king rose from the ground and soon everyone was back on horseback.

Slowly, the sad hunting party moved down the "Odin Valley", while a messenger was sent to Burgrave Guntahar in Blansegge to fetch capable scent hounds and other help. Incidentally, the trail was easy to read.

[3] Today called Macocha. This sinkhole is about 160 meters deep, 60 meters wide and about 90 meters long. The bottom can only be reached by descending, otherwise it is completely inaccessible.

At the end of the valley, however, the trail became indistinct, so it was decided to wait for the dogs there.

They were soon on the spot. To the king's great reassurance, Voland the blacksmith had also joined the procession uninvited.

He also checked the trail, but then he said gruffly: "Blitz and blue fire! I'm not a huntsman, but I can see that Hanold didn't ride into the valley, but he did ride out. Just go towards the sun, then you'll find the robbed woman."

Once again the companions, the king with the blacksmith and the Blansegg burgrave at the head, rode up the "Ode Valley".

They had reached the place where Hanold had fallen with his horse and the trail seemed to be lost. But the blacksmith rode on and took the lead from there.

The valley grew wilder and wilder; the trees stopped growing, and the ground was covered only by rocky crags, rubble, burnt moss and sparse grass growth. "This is the Dürre Tal [Dry Valley],"[4] said the blacksmith, "many a cave mouth opens up in it, and that's the only place to look for your golden-haired child, Herr Attal."

The king was satisfied. The stallions laboriously worked their way up through the desert rock. The riders dismounted to lead the horses by the bridle. At last the height was gained. Then the ghastly maw that had swallowed up Hanold the burgrave and all his secrets yawned again before the riders.

The passers-by shuddered. "Here we come to the sacred meadow of the most holy Ostara[5]," said the king, "I want to make a vow to the priestesses there, perhaps they know healing advice for my father's heart."

"You had better leave that alone, King!" cried the blacksmith in a growling tone. "You know that I'm as angry with this croaking ogre as I am with unburnt water. Blitz and blue fire, what am I to do with those who cower at the slightest spell like a sheep scenting a wolf!"

[4] It is still called that today, just as the later mentioned "Hollenstein" is still called "Hohlstein".

[5] Today Ostrow [Ostrava]; the name originated from: "Ostar" (Ostr) and "An" (Ow); it is pure German and not Slavic!

"And yet I will ask her! You, Voland, may still look for your own way; and I hardly believe that the Norns particularly desire it."

"By the hammer and anvil, believe it!" said Voland. "I've been over there, too often, in the Eisenstein[6] to get my iron for forging; so I've had more opportunity than you, Herr King, to observe the holy way of life of these priestesses. Their holiness is only outward like their dress; they act as if they were goddesses and their magic, - more like mole's milk! Know them well, they know that, and that's why they're as fond of me as a cat is of a bear-biter!"

The king had little desire to follow the conversation. He also kept a close eye on the tracks of the trotting horses, which were more clearly visible here. They were heading straight for the sanctuary. The blacksmith rode sullenly and silently at the king's side. A small round tower, surrounded by a low wall and leaning against the right wall of the valley, was the modest sanctuary of the fair goddess of spring, Ostara.

The king sounded his horn three times as he stopped his horse in front of the sanctuary in the Osterau. But there was no response. Three double calls now rang out from the horn, but these also had the same effect. Voland's eyes flashed, but he remained silent, even though his fist was clenched threateningly, and it was not small. Herr Attal again made three horn calls; they did not sound soft.

Then a trapdoor opened at the top of the beehive-like round tower, revealing a stern old woman. She wore a white robe and a wreath of mistletoe on the white cloth that covered her head like a veil. After she had lifted herself halfway out of the opening and sat down on the dome, she called out in a trembling, croaking voice: "What are you wanting, King, from the Albruna?"

"I will endow your sanctuary with abundant good, venerable one, if you give me good healing advice."

"And don't mimic the king with dizzy deception, you old toad!" cried the blacksmith; "you know me, so be warned, great-grandmother of lies!"

[6] A prehistoric mine, which Ptolemy remembers, still called that today.

This irritated the old woman, but also angered the king and his men. So the lord of men was angry:

"You wicked rogue, I would hate to offend the honorable Albruna with an unkind word!"

The men also grumbled. But Albruna shrieked angrily:

"Yes, I know you, you rudest of blacksmiths, I know you! What are you doing here in the sacred free place, in the holy white waters of Ostara? Rise up, you man of Locki, the bound god, whose council of mischief and evil spells populate the world with fiends! Leave the goddess's sanctuary, which you only desecrate!"

She paused, gasping, and Voland was about to hurl new words of quarrel when the lord of men commanded peace. With a malicious squint at Albruna, Voland complied with the king's command.

He asked Albruna about Pipara and the circumstances of her abduction by the Count of Stilifrieda, whom the earth had swallowed up.

Albruna had listened to Mr. Attal's report with dignity of bearing and expression, but Voland's keen eye had noticed how the aged priestess trembled and tried with difficulty to hide her fearful confusion behind dark-sounding words.

"She knows more than she wants to say! By Father Wieland! King, you are a koting[7] and have the right to enter any sanctuary. Step inside and see if she keeps her guard up! The horse tracks lead right up to here; Hanold's stallion stomped and grazed here!"

"Far be it from me to enter the sanctuary!" said the king. "If Albruna has not seen my child, then force will not return her to me. Even still my vow remains incomplete!" The king said this in a sad voice, through which something like defiance shone; Voland's words had not sounded without effect.

The king turned his horse with an unfriendly gesture, unaware of the poisonous evil eye that Albruna was shooting at the blacksmith, which he

[7] Koting = descendant of a dynasty of gods. All German noble and royal families trace their family tree back to Wuotan as their progenitor.

rendered harmless with a magic gesture. Back then, people believed in the "evil eye" more than they do today. The "crudest of all blacksmiths" protected himself from this. He stuck out his tongue at Albruna, who was so ill-disposed towards him, because he knew that the red color inhibits every spell; he also made another magical gesture to make the first counter-spell more powerful: he opened his right hand like a fan, put his thumb to his nose and held his little finger against the high priestess of Ostara's sanctuary, who was trembling with rage. Then he turned his horse, struck his heel into his flanks, and trotted after the king.

They rode further along the valley through dense forest. Here again the horse's tracks led them. And strangely enough, the same track met here, so that Hanold must have ridden back and forth through this valley. The horses were already tiring, but the king wanted nothing to do with rest and relaxation.

"That ugly hag knows about your child, King, or I'll have my beard dyed green!" cried the blacksmith at last. "I only half believe that she is not keeping Pipara herself down there in some hole. She's only afraid of your wrath and still doesn't know how to lie her way out! Oh, I know this saint! She knows it."

"Let us ride on," said the king; "after all, she can be asked a second question. You are hostile to her, therefore her actions arouse your suspicions."

They rode on.

"There stands Frau Hulda's Stone, also called the Hollenstein," said the blacksmith, "the White Water[8] springs from the Holy Mountain. Norns also live there, but I consider them less shameful than the Albruna of the Osterau." The blacksmith had said that, but the horse tracks led past Frau Hollen's castle, and in a wide arc.

"Look there, sir!" cried the blacksmith. "The girl-robber had carefully avoided being seen by the good women of Hollenstein; otherwise why ride around?"

[8] A stream today called "Bielawoda". [Currently: Bila Voda in the Czech republic]

Devil's Pulpit with a view of the Sloupertal valley not far from Ostrov (Osterau). From the author's sketchbook. Book 1, Chapter 3, Page 52.

The king made no reply and rode on, his eyes fixed on the trail.

They rode around Mrs. Hulda's temple site in a wide arc and followed the trail uphill through the forest to the left.

Now it circled another mountain and led down into the valley again, where another of Frau Perchta's sanctuaries stood with an ancient, sacred fountain.

The red dome tower was already shimmering up from the valley when the trail continued along the mountainside and finally lost itself in front of a rocky outcrop that rose up from the forest.

"Blitz and blue fire! King, we're here!" the blacksmith shouted excitedly. "There, the horse has stomped around that tree he tied it to. And there, King, there - what is that? Isn't that women's jewelry?"

He picked up a string of amber beads from the ground, but the beads rolled into the grass. The string was torn. The hunters collected the beads and gave them to the king. The king recognized the jewelry as belonging to his daughter.

They anxiously continued their search. Scattered amber beads and herbs that had been pulled down by trailing garments led to a cave.

"Bring dry brushwood and throw it in a heap," the blacksmith ordered.

While this was happening, he took a short, square-forged iron rod from his satchel and two small blacksmith's hammers. He struck one of them into the ground like an anvil and began to hammer the iron rod in a peculiar way; after a few blows it was red-hot.[9] He quickly stuck it into the pile of brushwood and blew on it with a strong breath; it was not long before a small flame flickered out of the brushwood. This was kindled into a flame and a huge fire was lit so as not to miss the torchlight in the cave.

Tree branches were set alight and used to enter the cave, with the king leading the way.

Illuminated by the reddish glow of the fire, the room widened eerily. The distorted shadows of the torchbearers flitted eerily along the jagged vaults

[9] A well-known blacksmith's skill that was once considered magic. The 17th century arquebusiers always had such sticks at hand in case the fuses were spoiled. But not everyone knew how to strike a red-hot stick.

and walls, as if the shadows of darkness, startled from their rest, were darting threateningly around the cheeky intruders. Startled nocturnal creatures, owls and bats fluttered around the intruders with fearful cries, but they soon settled back into their hiding places after the disturbers of the peace had advanced deeper and deeper into the cave, into depths where even these nocturnal creatures no longer lived.

Then the king bent down and lifted a gold bracelet from the rubble; he showed it to the blacksmith:

"You know this one! We have reached our destination! How wrong you treated Ostara's Albruna!"

"The master of all masters never errs, King! The woman is more evil than the nine-headed great-grandmother of the frost giant! But further, where is the bearer of the ring? She has not followed Hanold; the ring is broken."

Then the cave passage stopped, for a sudden chasm opened up, leading vertically to the depths.

Wailing, the king called his child's name down into the abyss. He thought he heard Hanold's last word from within the earth like a ghostly whisper:

"You may look for her, your Pipara! She is safe here nearby. She can't escape and you can't find her!"

This could only mean an abyss; here, where the amber pearls and gold ring were found, yawned the eerie maw. Whoever went down there would certainly never be able to escape.

Again and again the king called his child, but no answer; only the thousandfold echo sounded back, like the howl of a huge beast of prey, whose maw was the cave itself.

Then the blacksmith tied all the horse reins together and, swinging his torch, let himself down to the depths; the king followed.

They wandered around the passages for a long time, but were unable to find a third landmark. Finally, discouraged, they gave up their search and returned to their comrades.

They sat sadly and silently around the fire in front of the cave. The

horses grazed away. The bear biters made a noise; the dog handlers could only keep them on their leashes with great difficulty.

Attal and his traveling companions listened without saying a word; nothing could be heard but the suppressed growling of the dogs, the noise in the treetops above and the hoarse call of a royal eagle high up in the air.

Then a strange procession passed through the forest with an eerie silence. They were three maidens, followed by a black dog. But the three maidens were not walking side by side, but one behind the other. The foremost was dressed in white, and her dress was trimmed in blue; the second wore a white dress trimmed in red, while the third, who followed at a distance, wore a black robe with a black veil. A mighty black dog followed these spooky maidens without making a sound, ignoring the growling of the bear-biters.

Everyone looked with awe at the approaching holy women; even the blacksmith had no words of shame in stock this time. Then the king remembered the vows he had made at the sanctuary of the Osterau.

"Greetings and good hunting! You sad hunters, give us food and drink; we are tired and sunburnt and need refreshment!", said the Norn with the blue robes.

The king replied:

"Wise, murmuring Hechsa! What little we have is yours; bread and cheese and mead. But why, wise one, do you call us sad hunters?"

"Is not the hunter sad, whose mind is wounded because he can’t find the track of the noble stag?"

That was the Hechsa's counter-question. Attal rose and spread out his cloak to prepare the seat for the three Norns, who sat down in silence and feasted on what was offered.

After they were sated, they slowly rose from their seats and departed in the same order in which they had arrived.

The first stopped in front of King Attal as they passed and spoke:

"Thanks be from the Hechsa for refreshment and food, and that you will find the daughter!"

The second also stopped before the king and said:

"Thanks be from Truda for refreshment and food, that Pipara will one day have the courage to give herself to death in the hour of greatest need!"

Then the king stood before the three and said:

"You too, then, take the king's thanks for favorable salvation advice! My blacksmith Voland shall forge a brewing cauldron for you from sacred ore, so large that all three of you and the dog can stand in it. Wherever you want to set up this cauldron in my grounds, there it may be: I will give you as much forest as can be heard from the sound of this basin when the blacksmith's hammer roars out of it."

That was a royal vow.

The Hechsa's blue eyes flashed with delight, then she spoke to the king:

"As the sun's bright rays escape the clouds, your torment will end, you will soon find Pipara!"

Equally joyfully moved, Truda spoke:

"As far as the bright eastern moon scatters the flowers on the grass, as far as your proud oath-father will give honor to all the folk!"

Then the third, the wicked Norn, came and called out:

"Virtue and vice bears its fruit; blessing is blessed and cursing is cursed!"

With that, the three sisters left, followed by the black dog.

Silently, expectantly, the companions sat around the fire. Nothing moved for a long time. The blacksmith had got up to check on the horses, when he came across a little rabbit that was behaving very cutely and doing his little mane, as if there was not a hound to be seen for a thousand miles. A quick grab from Voland and poor little Master Lampe wriggled in the air, for the master had caught him by the ears and snatched him up from the grass.

"Wait, Lampe, I want you to bring a nice greeting from me to the old bark beetle down in the Osterau!"

And with that, he tied the poor little rabbit's legs together and put him in his spacious tool bag.

There was a cry of joy from all the passengers, together, as if only one of them had shouted it.

Pipara stepped out of the mouth of the cave and rushed to her father's chest, her golden hair flying.

They held each other for a long time; with tears of joy on his eyelashes, the father caressed the child he had found again. All his worries, hardship and fatigue were forgotten as Attal had his Pipara back and could stroke her golden hair again. Even the bear-biters crowded around and rubbed their fat heads against the joyfully caressing king's daughter.

Even the blacksmith, although his demeanor did not resemble that of a soft-hearted maiden, was touched, for they all loved the golden-haired child with all their hearts. And yet he rumbled against the girl he had found:

"Blitz and blue fire! Girl, what are you up to? You let us ride there night and day, you let us forge spells and blaspheme with women, you let us crawl through crevices and sleep, and then you come out safe and sound, as if you had only scolded and played with us! It would be better done otherwise, I think, girl!"

But Pipara knew well how to interpret the blacksmith's words, so she said with a friendly smile:

"That's a lie, master of all masters, - it wasn't a pleasant ride I took; and you can imagine that I scratched many a memorial mark into Cousin Hanold's skin with these nails; they will remind him of his knave's play for a long time to come!"

"And so you do not yet know that nothing will remind him of it, because he has become a quiet man?" said the king, and told of the horrible end of the kidnapper. This shook Pipara, but not as much as if her heart had died with him.

Many more questions swayed back and forth, and as it usually happens when two or more people want to tell each other what they have experienced at the same time, so it happened here too; no one got around to telling the story.

The king urged them to ride home, for Frau Hildebirga, like the captured Romans, was certainly waiting with longing for those who had ridden out.

So the now merry companions rode through the forest with the loud sound of horns; Pipara on the sunken Burgrave's stallion.

With a loud "Heilo!" the cavalcade roared up to the red beehive tower of the Osterau. Then the king stopped and did the horn calls as before.

"Hoiho, venerable Albruna! Here I have the stolen one; why did you give evasive advice before? I will remember you!"

The king called out to the high priestess, but she replied with a quarrelsome word:

"It would have been better if Pipara had been devoured by the mountain with Hanold than to follow the Roman to Italy; it would have been better if the bear had torn them apart in the cave cleft!"

"You will have a bad king's reward for this word! In anger I part from you and your sanctuary!"

The king trotted off without greeting or looking back. But the blacksmith had taken the hare out of his harness, quickly loosened its fetters and threw the rabbit, Master Lampe, at the quarrelsome woman's head. It got caught in Albruna's veil, tore the mistletoe wreath from her and caused irreparable confusion to her robes. The old woman shrieked loudly, but the little rabbit was not so unwise as to allow itself to be caught a second time; it had glided gently down from the cupola tower into the bush, from where it fled hastily with long leaps towards the nearby forest.

With the little rabbit, the "worst of all blacksmiths" also hurled this insult at the hated one's head:

"The Blansegger blacksmith sends you this, hare; the son shall kiss the mother!"

This was more than an ordinary insult, and stunned and ashamed, Albruna disappeared from the tower. She was defeated.

But only the "master of all masters", who was in league with the evil advisor of the gods, the deceitful Loki, with Loki the fire spirit, whom even the gods feared, could dare to do such a thing.

They continued at a sharp trot until the forest thinned out and the towers and farmsteads of Eburodunum beckoned in the rays of the setting sun, announcing the longed-for rest to those weary of the road.

Fourth Adventure

How Gaul's Messengers Hoisted Themselves to the Quads

When a storm is approaching, when the first gusts of wind whirl through the fir, when the first, still distant lightning flashes under the heavy weather clouds and then the thunder slowly follows, as if it were still asleep and first had to be shaken awake, then whatever has wings flutters fearfully towards its nest, every animal in the forest flees and seeks a safe hiding place. Even man, who likes to call himself the Lord of Creation, forgets his presumption of dominion and behaves not unlike the creatures that crawl and flutter, for he too, the domineering one, flees to a safe hiding place. Between the camp of Emperor Gallienus and the glamorous colony of Carnuntum was a particularly friendly spot that Galliena chose to publicly display her grief for the missing Emperor Gallienus, accompanied by her nurse Menophila and her favorite slave Cora. The Roman princess knew very well what she was doing; nor was she unaware of the magic that women's tears cast on the bearded world, provided that the shedder of tears was young and pretty, for otherwise it was not worth the effort of offering consolation.

It was not worth mourning in the camp, for only the few dignitaries of the army frequented it; in the Hibernum Castrum of Carnuntum it was no better, for there custom would have demanded that they lock themselves in a room, which would have been pointless, as is clear to see.

But the particularly friendly place chosen by the unhappy emperor's widow-bride as a place of mourning was accessible to all; anyone who wanted to see it could see the beautiful princess weeping there and hear her lamenting for the bridegroom she thought dead. But this particularly

friendly place was the Sylvani mausoleum outside Carnuntum[1]. It was a very peculiar tomb. Built near a crossroads, it opened its circular hall in four directions through a mighty portal, while the enormous cross vault canopied the marble statue of the rich Carnuntian Sylvanius, who had erected that enormous monument there more to his ostentation than to his insignificant personality. Between the four gate openings there were niches with marble statues and in front of them reclining seats where it was pleasant to mourn in the cool shade. The black mourning robes also stood out against the white marble walls and marble seats. Domina Galliena sat there today and wept just as she had done yesterday and the day before.

Then the Quade Kadolt came striding from the camp with a heavy tread. He had been lying in Annius' tent for several days with a sore head, and Annius had had him well looked after, for he intended to use him as a guide to Quadenland.

Cold water poured over the head several times a day in sufficient quantities, and doing this continuously for several days, is said to be very good for banishing headaches. Today good Kadolt was already feeling quite well. He was walking around the camp and came across the absent emperor's purple tent quite by chance.

There he stood in front of the tent, looking up at the golden knobs on the gables and at the golden cords that held the purple draperies, not quite knowing what he wanted. He had a kind of memory, as if something had happened in front of and inside this tent in which he had been involved, so to speak.

He rubbed his forehead, then scratched behind his right ear, then thoughtfully took his chin in his right hand; but the memory would not quite dawn on him. It still felt as if his mind was fermenting, like over in the rocky stables of Hohenräthien, where the fiends brew the evil weather. But as he had thus touched the elbow of his right arm with his left hand, he felt something hard in his game belt; he pulled it out. It was a golden cup. He

[1] The ruins of this mighty tomb still stand today near Petronell and are known as the "Heidenthor".

admired the precious thing for a long time and wondered where he had got it. But he could not think who it was that he had knocked down to get this booty honestly. For to call a gold cup his, and not to have beaten the one who had it before, that was out of the ordinary. And yet, had he not encountered anything unusual? A large throne chair, - a beautiful woman, and then - rose-colored light! - He pocketed the cup again and rubbed his forehead, and ran past the tent, and ran back again, and still knew nothing.

As he was running around like an old bear that snaps at flies for his amusement without catching any, he heard two legionaries talking about the missing Caesar and the grieving Galliena. He trotted on for a little while, then stopped. Gallienus? Galliena? Mausoleum Sylvani?! - Now he opened his mouth wide, his eyes no less, for a ray of light had fallen into his clouded memory. Everything he had experienced now stood clearly and distinctly before his memory, except for the very small circumstance of how he had come to have the raging headache.

But he didn't worry about that and trotted cheerfully to the Sylvani mausoleum. Loyalty to his lord drove him to see if his shieldmaster's bride was not in need of his comfort.

"Princess, there comes the desolate ruffian!" whispered Menophila, the nurse. But Galliena shrugged her shoulders pityingly and said:

"He is not to be feared, the potion has done its duty; he who has the juice of the atropa in his body will lose his memory!" With that, she leaned back again carelessly, as if the pain had conquered her.

That's how the Quade found her. He stared at her in amazement for a long time; the black robe made him think.

"Princess! What's with this black dress? You look like Helia, the goddess of death herself! That frightens me, and yet I know fear very well!"

Galliena looked coldly and impassively at the Quaden, then wearily turned her head to her servant: "Ask the man what he wants, Mena, I don't know him!"

"You hear it, good man," Mena said, standing up and trying to push the astonished man away. "You hear it yourself, the princess doesn't know you. Go your way and leave her to her pain!"

"The princess is mistaken, good woman. --"

"Listen, you bearskinner!" Mena shouted indignantly. "First of all, hear that I am not a woman, but an imperial slave!" She thought that she had thus shown the Teuton the great respect he should have for her person.

"That doesn't matter," replied Kadolt with equanimity, "even if I am a free Quade, I am not proud enough to let you feel badly." Turning to the princess, however, he said, placing his right hand confidentially on her armpit: "Princess, stop crying, be cheerful again, as you were in the tent. You know that my arm and my frame are yours! Don't cry, princess! I'll soon be with you again, for today we ride to seek the emperor!"

"Mena had recovered from her stupor and called out angrily to the Teuton: "And if you don't hurry away, you'll know who I am." But Kadolt paid her no heed, but said, turning to the princess: "And no answer, Galliena, my fair Freya, No ---"

He could speak no further. The princess stood before him, flaming with anger, and silently dismissed the intruder with a commanding gesture. That had an effect. Kadolt's mind was filled with a faint sense of what all this meant. A deep blush covered his face; it was shame at the realization of what he had done. But his heart also felt bitterness. He was infinitely sorry. Tears stood in his eyes as he said, "And yet, princess, my arm and my good spirit belong to you, but you shall have your pledge, I may never drink from it." With that he reached into his game belt and handed the cup to the princess with averted eyes. She said coldly: "If you don't want it, you can give it to my dear Mena as atonement for the insult." A blush flashed across Quaden's face again, but his blue eyes flashed with anger. Furious, he threw the cup on the ground and stomped it flat, bending and crumpling it as if it were made of thin lead and not strong gold. Then he picked up the precious metal and threw it contemptuously into the slave girl's lap, shouting: "I'll give you the gold, slave girl, but the cup from which the goddess-like princess drank with me, that cup I would only give to Galliena alone! The gold may be of value to you, but it is worthless to me because of your word, Princess! But my loyalty to my lord remains unbroken! May the gods protect you, farewell, Galliena!"

The Quade cast a wistful glance at the princess, then walked proudly and defiantly away. Galliena looked after the departing man in astonishment and not without sympathy. She had never encountered such defiance before, having grown up among slaves. She felt something like respect for the walker and would have liked to call him back. Mena hastily hid the gold, lamenting only for the destroyed cup. She remained indifferent to the scolding she had received, she was a slave after all!

***

On the same day, two Romans and the Quade Kadolt rode over the Danube bridge at Carnuntum together with the necessary pack horses and entourage of slaves. One of the Romans was the prefect Annius, the other the centurion Gemellus. Their first destination was Stilifrieda, where they asked for a hostel for the night. However, they were not accommodated in the town, nor in the count's castle, but in one of the burgrave's farmsteads. The Meier received them as guests in his hall, he personally unbuckled their swords and offered them a welcome drink, the ancient symbol of Germanic hospitality.

After the tables in the hall had been lifted[2] and the mead horns circled, the landlord started up:

"I'm glad, comrades, that he's allowed me to give you safe news. I have just ridden in myself, for I gave your friends an escort to Eburodunum to King Attal's court together with our Count Hanold and several other neighbors. Count Hanold, a cousin of the king, stayed behind for his own business, but we arrived here shortly before you after a hard ride. Your friends are well; tomorrow you will meet them safely in King Attal's castle."

That pleased Annius, but he couldn't understand why Rome's envoys had only passed through here today; it was inexplicable where they had spent

[2] The hall in the old noble farms was like the barn of our farmers. Along the walls ran the mead benches, opposite the door (the Golfe) was the high seat of the landlord. The tables were laid before the meal and taken out again after the meal to make room for speech, games and dancing.

the other time. So he investigated further.

Ruothart, the landlord, also informed him of this. Rome's envoys had traveled far and wide throughout the country, had visited Attal's neighboring kings and concluded treaties with them, and a large number of lance bearers and the necessary horsemen had gathered in all these places. All of them look forward to the long journeys and adventures. Two of Ruothart's sons are themselves among those gathering in Stilifrieda, both of them well mounted.

"Two of your sons? You are wealthy, why are you letting them go abroad?" Gemellus had asked.

"My firstborn remains here, he is my heir; but the others are without goods, except for the little they inherit from their mother. If they stayed here, they would be the eldest brother's servants. If they go away, they will acquire the glory and spoils of war and will perhaps be richer than me. We know of freemen here who have little in the way of wealth, but whose younger brothers are kings!"

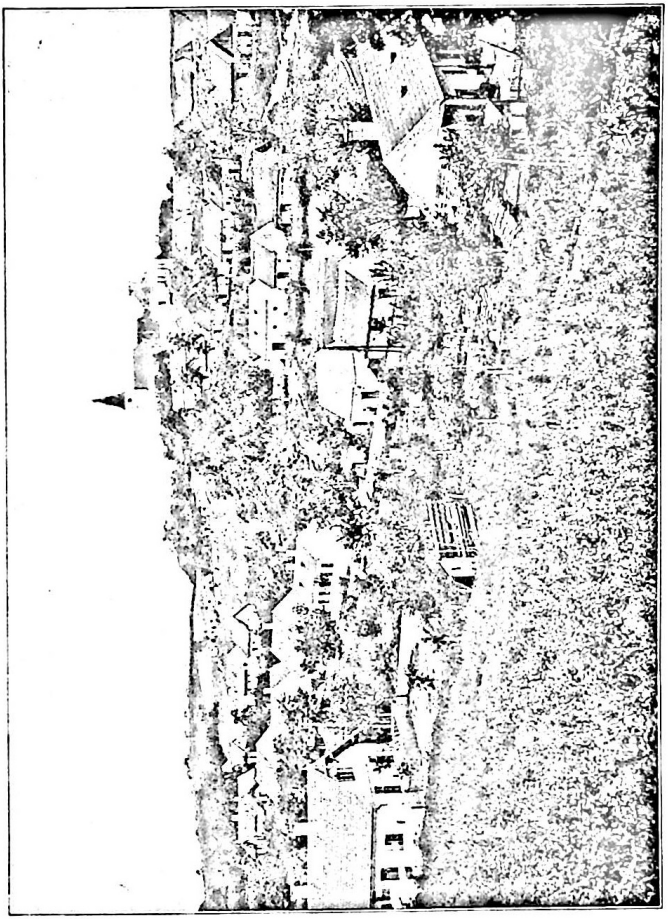
Then Annius understood the words of Caesar Valerianus, who had said that every Teuton slain in the service of Rome would decrease the number of those who were a constant threat to the state and the city of Rome. And indeed, the Roman wars without and the revolts within consumed hundreds of thousands of Germanic tribesmen, who faced each other in armies and strangled each other for foreign interests.

The next day they rode on in high spirits. The sun had not yet reached its highest point, but they stopped before Eburodunum. Kadolt, who had transformed himself from a Quade into a Marcomanni by his own power, both in terms of costume and armament, naturally also carried the bugle that characterized the Marcomanni horseman, especially when he acted as leader. That is why he boldly rode up to Eburodunum's wall and sounded the alarm call with his bugle, as a true and proper royal citizen could hardly do better.

The answering cry rang down from the rampart, then the gatekeeper leaned over the wicker breastwork and called out:

"Whose people are you, and what trade brings you here? Let me know!"

"Messengers from the Roman Emperor Valerianus, sent to King Attal with a letter and a message! Open up!"



Stillfried an der March, formerly Stilfrieda.
Book 1, Chapter 4, Page 66.
Reproduced with permission from Kunstverlag P. Ledermann in Vienna.

That's what the square Marcoman, who felt very comfortable as such, had shouted with a proud tone. Riding is more comfortable than walking, he had thought to himself, and it's also nobler.

But the wallkeeper's answer was not to his liking, for he called down:

"King Attal has ridden out, and your companions with him, you may meet them at Meliodunum[3]."

This was a ruse on the part of the wall-keeper, for he knew full well that the Romans had been captured, but that the king was in search of Pipara and had not yet returned from there. He was reluctant to let Romans into the city under such circumstances. The ruse worked perfectly. It seemed understandable that Rome's envoys must have moved on after completing their mission, for what else would they be doing in little Eburodunum?

So they moved on happily towards sunrise.

***

In Eburodunum, however, the appearance of the Romans had aroused an uneasy mood; it was thought that the imprisonment of the legation would have dire consequences and that it had been carried out hastily. They longed for the king's return. Frau Hildebirga sat in the kitchen with red eyes and paid no attention to anything that concerned her; the maids were having a good day.

"Call Walpurgis!" ordered the queen, for she wanted to ask her again and again what she herself did not know. But Walpurgis was nowhere to be found. This caused a stir.

Dudar came and suggested to the queen that she seek advice from the holy councilors of the Spielberg. The suggestion was approved. Frau Hildebirga climbed the Spielberg or, as it was actually called, the Spindelberg; Spiel and Spindel meant the same thing. The gate, which remained closed to other mortals, opened to her, the rune-knowing, knowledgeable wife of a

[3] Today Olmütz [Olomouc in eastern Czech Republic].

king.

The queen was led into the interior of the Wuotan sanctuary by the three beautiful, youthful councilors, Hechsa, Truda and Wala, who were dressed exactly like the three virgins who had met the king outside the cave in the forest. The three walked through winding hollow paths with Frau Hildebirga, whose entourage remained outside. At last they stood in front of a round tower. Like all its peers, it had the shape of a large beehive and stood on a conical hill that towered far above the surrounding ramparts, as did the square pyramid in front of it. This was the bed of Wuotan, the burnt altar of the king of the gods. Such domed towers, however, were not built, but woven from willow, covered with clay on the inside and outside, plastered and painted with shiny red paint. The queen was led into this tower's round chamber. Hechsa and Truda stayed with Frau Hildebirga, but the black-veiled Wala climbed through a shaft leading to the depths into the mountain's interior. She soon returned with the high priestess, Albruna, who was crowned with mistletoe.

The queen told her of her sorrow in a sobbing voice and asked for advice. The "wise woman" bowed her head thoughtfully, then stepped in front of the small hearth-like altar that stood in the middle of the circular chamber.

Then Albruna looked into the cauldron hanging on chains above the altar fire and dipped a sprig of mistletoe into it, with which she sprinkled herself and the queen, beckoning them to follow her. This all happened in silence.

Descending through the shaft, the two women soon reached an underground passageway, whose windings they followed in silence. Here and there, lamps burned in small niches of light, which shone less and less brightly and made the threefold night that weighed on these rooms all the more palpable.

A strange circular hall was reached. All around were thick columns without bases and capitals, just as they had been left standing in the rock when the diggers had carved the halls into the stone. A blue dome arched above the pillars, behind which ran a circular walkway. A round altar stood in the center of the hall. A bluish, flickering flame burned on it.

Albruna threw various herbs into this fire, then took a spindle, a sieve and a pair of scissors, murmured spells, fastened the three magic things together and then let them spin in circles. Children still do something similar today with wooden plates or coins; they call it plate rubbing [Tellerreiben]. Albruna had previously scattered sticks on the ground, each of which was carved with a rune and designated one of the Romans in her custody.

The sieve spun round and round, but ran out of the circle formed by the sticks without touching any of them, and only then did it tip over. The spindle and scissors came loose and fell out of the sieve.

Albruna shook her head and began the spell again, but this time it didn't go any better. She threw new herbs into the flame and spoke more powerful spells, but the third time was no better.

"Madam Queen," the old woman began, "that's a bad sign! We are holding innocent prisoners. The kidnapper is not in Eburodunum!"

"All advisor, I believe that," the queen replied, "but the one who had my daughter stolen is also caught here, I won't let him take that from me!"

"Not even him, woman!" said Albruna firmly.

"Then who is he, where is he now?"

That was a question that was easy to ask and difficult to answer. However, the wise woman was unwilling to jeopardize her reputation and her infallibility by asking such daring questions again, so she said:

"Woman, the guides of destiny say, 'Found will Pipara not lost will be as his,' let that suffice you."

Now the fortune teller remained stubbornly silent and led the queen back up through the corridors to the tower hall.

However, the fateful saying was infallible, for spoken without emphasis, it said nothing, and if what was to come was to come, it was to be turned according to the event. It could then always read either: Pipara will be found, she will not be lost, or: Pipara will not be found, she will be lost.

***

Walpurgis had wept many a tear for her playmate, for it was clear to her

that the Romans were innocent.

She knew of Titus' quickly kindled love for Pipara, and she suspected that her friend was not at all averse to the fire-eyed and fire-talking southerner. Indeed, she thought she had guessed that Titus was more than he seemed, although at first she was not averse to assuming that he was exaggerating somewhat. Such things were said to have happened before.

But at least she had her own thoughts and kept her eyes and senses open. Then she heard the wall keeper lying to the Romans outside the gate. Her plan was quickly formed.

As she was, she hurried to a part of the rampart that was little noticed, swung herself nimbly over the wickerwork and slid down the steep slope of the red-burnt rampart.

She had reached the bottom without taking any damage. Now she hurried forward as fast as she could to get out of sight of Eburodunum's guards. That was how she had made her way towards the sunrise. After a long walk, she came to a farm that belonged to her mother's brother. She skirted the estate in a wide arc, pretending to come from the other side and heading for Eburodunum. So she entered and appeared very tired. There was much questioning about where from and where to after the greetings had been exchanged. But a cunning little maiden knows very well how to deceive even the wisest of homes and the most astute of mothers about what she wants to conceal from them. So did the clever Walpurgis. She had, of course, lost her way when she went on a pilgrimage to the sanctuary in the Osterau with her father, old Babo, and her brother, Totilo, the boy. A bear had attacked them in a hostile manner, her horse had bolted and run away. Somewhere it had fallen and was now lying there with broken legs. After many a wandering journey, she was now tired and sunburnt here. They believed her and offered her refreshment and rest, and the uncle also wanted to escort her to Eburodunum. But she thanked him and only asked for a horse; she would send it back today. The grumpy old man was satisfied. Soon Walpurgis was in the saddle and trotting happily towards Eburodunum. The old man and his mistress discussed the event for a long time, and the mistress did not fail to reproach her landlord for being so complacent as to let his

sister's child ride all alone. He grumbled a little and went out into the yard.

When Walpurgis was far enough away from the farmstead, she turned off the road, rode around the estate in a wide arc and then rode down the road after the Romans at a sharp trot.

They had a long way to go.

They had already reached the gates of Meliodunum and Kadolt sounded his horn and made his report. But the gatekeeper was a big lump. He called out:

"Shove off, little rider, those in Eburodunum probably know why they turned you away from the door; so I'll hold it too. Tie your horse to a dry branch and go to the elm tree as a guest! Hoiho, we know very well that King Attal is in Eburodunum! Shove off, little rider!"

Kadolt shook with rage.

"Come down, you bastard, if you have courage! I will lead you to the elm tree and assign you a high place with this innkeeper, which should please you if you are used to having a sore throat! Come down, you wretch!"

Thus words of quarrel flew back and forth. From these came threats, finally stones were thrown, and from these it was not far to the throwing of spears.

A solid boulder had knocked on the wall-keeper's head; he had not been opened, but the wall-keeper was determined to throw an envoy at the head of Kadolt, who was to be opened. So he took up his javelin and shouted:

"You hungry, land-bound rascal! You unfeeling clod! Wait, I'll get you out of the habit of being rough!"

With that he raised the spear. But Kadolt had again seized a powerful stone and struck the wall-keeper's fist, so that he, forced by the burning pain, let the weapon go. Kadolt had followed the throw with this word of contention:

"I've met more polite gatekeepers; let's see who's more polite, me or you, you rascal!"

But the gatekeeper had had enough. He blew his horn angrily and shouted:

"Feindio! Feindio!"

It was alive behind the willow-woven breastplates. Spears gleamed in the reddish sunlight and there were shouts of battle. At last a well-armed man stepped forward and lifted himself over the breastwork.

"Who are you, men, who quarrel with fighting words?"

The man who was obviously the master of the place called out. But Kadolt was angry for once, and it is seldom good to speak kindly to an angry man.

"Why do you ask so imprudently! Since when is it customary to greet messengers of the Emperor of Rome with a hail of stones? Who are you, tell us now!"

You may think so!" cried the one from the rampart. "You are murderers, not envoys! The emperor of Rome has nothing to do with me, I am not the king!"

"We're looking for him here; he's in your castle! That's why I demand admission! Open up, you nameless one!"

This enraged the castle earl; he raised his javelin threateningly:

"If no other bar can help, let this one be advanced to keep troublesome countrymen at bay!"

"Shoot the shaft, you scoundrel!" shouted Kadolt angrily.

The burgrave fired. The shaft whizzed towards the Quade. But he parried his horse, caught the whizzing spear in flight, spun it around his head, and the Ger whirred back towards the count. With a sneer, the Quade called up to the rampart:

"Thank you very much, you guest-killer! I'll give you back your present! I have a skewer of my own!"

An angry howl of applause rang down from the rampart. But the Burgrave had also intercepted the approaching Ger and sent it back. Groaning, the centurion Gemellus sank from his horse. The count's spear trembled in his chest.

But those on the rampart had not yet seen any further, and those in front of the rampart had not yet brought succor to the man who had been struck dead, when a maiden came rushing up, waving a white scarf from afar. Now

In the middle of the hall stood a round altar.
Book 1, Chapter 4, Page 70.

she came running up, panting almost breathlessly from the gazing horse.

"Give peace! What you are fighting about is a mistake!"

The one from the rampart shouted in astonishment:

“Walpurgis, what are you doing? Since when have you been riding as a battle maiden?”

But she replied:

“I've come too late, Burgrave Skaramunt! These are good men, give them peace and look after them well! Woe to the manslaughter!”

She quickly jumped off her horse and pushed the men away from the wounded man's side.

“Give way, you men, Walpurgis knows many a herb to staunch the blood.”

But no sooner had she seen the centurion than she called out:

“There's no cure for him, he's dead! How I lament the one who loved him!”

Shocked, the others stood around the dead man. Then the men from Meliodunum came with a stretcher and loaded the dead guest onto their shoulders to carry him into the city. Skaramunt, the castle count, had also come out. But he avoided the dead man. A slain man's wounds bleed anew when his murderer stands before him; Skaramunt wanted to spare the dead man that.

But the burgrave reached out his hand to Kadolt, shook it and said:

“You are a brave warrior; let us keep the peace and make friends!”

He shook the offered hand and replied:

“Have great reward from the Gods for your manly word. I also recognized you as a mighty man of valor! But we can only make friends when I know that your king is my shield master's friend! For know that I am a man of the emperor of Rome, Gallienus, and have also sworn allegiance to his bride, the princess Galliena. If you are the emperor's friend, be mine too; if you are his enemy, then be my enemy too, just as I am yours!”

The men fell asleep, then the burgrave went to talk to Walpurgis.

But Annius stood admiringly beside Kadolt.

“Listen, Kadolt!” he said, “I can't believe it, I can't understand how you

two can become friends, you who just a few moments ago would have had no greater pleasure than tearing each other's throats out!!"

"That amazes you, Roman? Is it any different for you? We Germans hold it like this: if we are enemies, well, we try to defeat each other; but we only show contempt for the coward! We value nothing more than heroic courage in battle. When we have found a brave man, and the battle is fought out, then those who were enemies before honor themselves, for they now know how to value themselves. You see, Roman, the fact that this fills you with amazement is what amazes me!"

The gates of Meliodunum had closed behind the entrants.

***

Between the camp of Emperor Gallienus and the splendid colony of Carnuntum was a particularly friendly place that Domina Galliena chose to publicly display her grief for the missing Emperor Gallienus. This particularly friendly place was the Sylvani Mausoleum.

The whole of Carnuntum already knew that the beautiful Galliena, dressed in black, was mourning her dead bridegroom there. In black, but not in widow's garb, because she was still not quite a widow after all, and because the widow's garb would have been far too dressy. Sylvani's mausoleum soon became fashionable, so to speak, thanks to these regular visits by the beautiful princess. The aristocratic world went there for a stroll; the dominatrixes in black robes, of course, the patricians and knights in their state costumes, the dandies carefully dressed up, but all to see the beautiful princess.

But Carnuntum was a trading center, and speculation outweighed pleasure. It was the reverse of Rome. What would not have been possible there could be done here.

Merchants came and shyly offered their wares to the mourner, and - the mourner bought. This quickly became known. Of course, they were soon followed by more of the merchants' guild. For at all times there have been several hundred imitators for every inventor; this is deeply rooted in

Darwin's theory of evolution.

One fine fall day, an honest merchant came to Sylvani's mausoleum in front of the mourning Domina. He acted very sympathetic, wore a foreign black costume, a pointed black fur cap and said that he was a Parthian and sold precious stones worthy of adorning the sun god's throne. Merapis was the honest Parthian's name.

“My good Parthian, what are your jewels to me, who have done away with all jewelry and pomp?” sighed the princess. “Go and sell them to those who walk the path of life through roses!”

“By my father's beard! Most gracious princess! I honor your pain, I admire your pain, I adore it, your pain, but I cannot understand it, your heart, that it has renounced the splendor and the pleasures of the world. Behold, most exalted of dominas, behold this splendor! This amethyst as large as an eagle's egg, and as purple! - How like his! - Or the emerald so large that your treasure chest, princess, has none half as large. And these pearls! Only blessed India has such treasures! Who should have them but you, the empress of all queens, you the fairest of the fair!”

And the honest Parthian had returned home from the Sylvani mausoleum, not without having made a good bargain. The princess had let him speak with the most benevolent kindness, had chosen the most beautiful stones with noble sorrow and had paid the man an enormous sum.

In a few days the ladies of Carnuntum idolized Galliena and strove to mourn as sublimely as she did, even though they themselves did not know what for. But Roman fashion cared little for such trivialities. The male world idolized her no less, for what could be more touching than this lovely Niobe?

The dandies elevated her to Olympos and mocked each other, for to play the role of comforter to the grieving grace was the highest goal of the highest wishes. But it was the merchants and traders of Carnuntum who praised her most, for - this was a princess who knew how to pay!

Galliena had thus become the genius loci, and seemingly without intention. Only the soldiers did not quite know what to think of the mourners. At any rate, they respected their wealth, and that was enough for them to reckon with it. Galliena had feared the approach of a thunderstorm

and, with feminine cunning, had tried to secure a place of refuge from it.

When a thunderstorm is approaching, when the first gusts of wind swirl through the fir trees, when the first distant flashes of lightning scurry under the heavy weather clouds and then the thunder slowly follows, as if it were still asleep and had to be shaken awake first, then everything that has wings flutters towards its nest in fear, every animal in the forest flees and seeks a safe hiding place; Man, too, who likes to call himself the Lord of Creation, forgets his presumption of dominion, and makes it not unlike the creatures that crawl and flutter, for he, too, the domineering one, flees to a safe hiding place.

Fifth Adventure

How Pipara Came Home and Freed the Prisoners

As far as the bright eastern moon scatters the flowers on the grass, as far as your noble oath-holder proudly bows to all the folk. - These words of Truda's resounded in King Attal's ear for a long time, while Albruna's imprecation of Osterau did not particularly burden Attal's mind. Even in those days, long since passed, the friendly greeting of a cheerful girl's lips was more important than the nagging of an old, toothless, and yet biting, woman. The proud Eidam gave Herr Attal pause for thought. Even then, marrying off a daughter in accordance with her status was not the least of a father's worries, whether the father was a king or a freeman. The concern remained the same despite the different framework. If the father of a king's daughter was promised a daughter's husband by his holy councilors, i.e. by those who ought to know, a husband who would give the people everything, he was no less eager to get to know this proud husband than the father of a peasant maiden, who drew from equally reliable sources the foreknowledge that the rich husband potentially had more than a hundred cows.

There was no doubt that the holy women outside the cave were more favorably disposed to Pipara's marriage than the high priestess of Osterau, which again seemed to deviate from the rule that older ladies of both kinds prefer to make marital alliances. But the most hated enemy of Voland, the master of all masters, had not understood how to clothe her word so firmly or so pleasantly, which was to blame for the fact that it remained spoken into the wind.

The proud leader, who is to command all peoples, had already rooted

himself firmly in Father Attal's soul and shone like the proudest summer solstice sun, so that the radiance of the reddish giver of all light and warmth was completely lost to the enraptured father of Pipara, so that he did not even notice how the women of Eburodunum crowded around the rampart to look at the homecoming.

They were visibly unsatisfied that they did not see the disgraceful kidnapper bound and gagged in the train; the only consolation was that the disgraceful man's skull had been split in two on some happy occasion.

They had ridden into the courtyard. Mrs. Hildebirga had lifted her daughter from her horse and embraced her long and intimately, for the love of a mother for her daughter is expressed differently from the love of a father. It is softer, rounder, more tender, more devoted than that of the father, though not deeper than the latter; both are alike, both differ, as do man and woman in general.

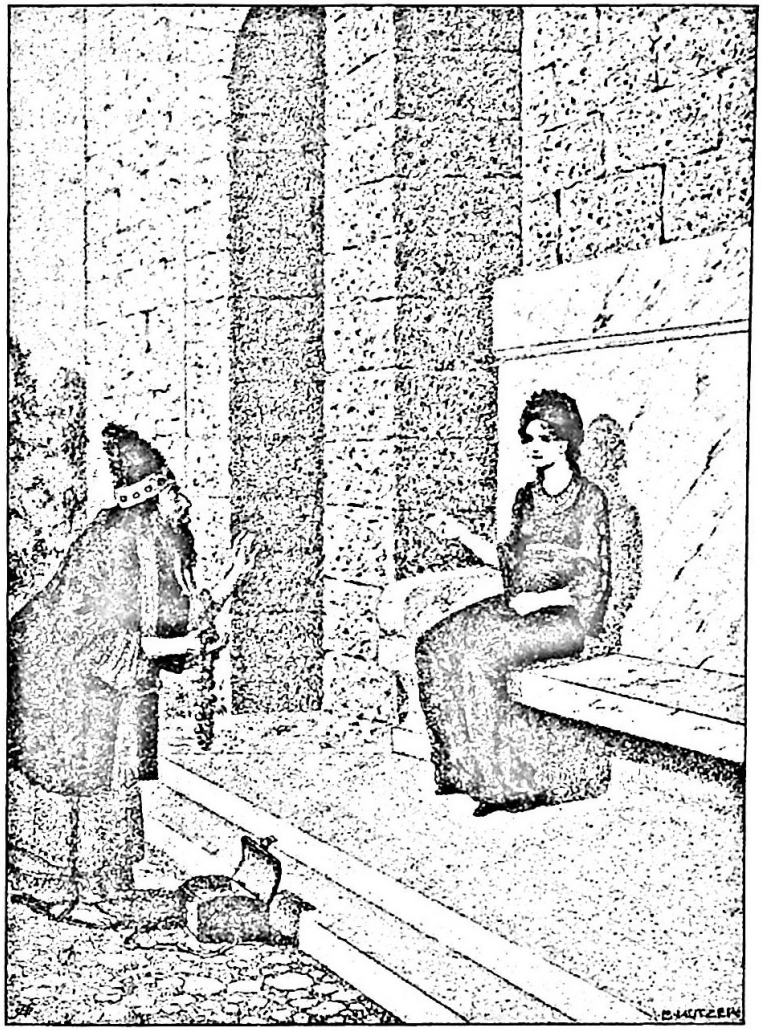
At last Mrs. Hildebirga had seen and kissed her daughter enough, and gradually their surroundings began to emerge from the sea of events.

Pipara looked around. The hall was lit up; the king's good traveling companions were also sitting in their seats, but the Romans were missing.

"Where is Titus?" she asked quickly.

The good lady queen was astonished and shook her motherly head with wide eyes; Herr Attal was also struck by the proud oath-keeper when he asked who this Titus was. He remembered the words that Hanold had spoken shortly before he sank; he also remembered Albruna's words of contention. This memory did not particularly amuse him. Pipara was no less astonished that neither father nor mother knew Titus. She explained herself further. Then it occurred to the king that he would not only have to release the Romans immediately, but also make good his claim. That made him angry. After all, it is not a particularly joyful act to admit wrongdoing and make amends. It is even more difficult for a king to do so, which is only natural. But Pipara reassured her father and promised to settle the matter so that he would be spared the unpleasant discussions.

"And Titus is so kind and good, dear father, that he will certainly not be angry with you!"



By my father's beard! Gracious princess! I honor your pain, but I cannot comprehend your heart...
Book 1, Chapter 4, page 79

At this conclusion of Pipara's speech, the king and queen swayed their troubled heads even more thoughtfully, until at last the king spoke gruffly:

"Now be silent, you wise girl! Know that it is the legate Severius Silvanus with whom I have to negotiate, not Titus, who is one of his last followers!" --

But Pipara smiled superiorly, wrapped her arm around her father's neck and said softly in his ear:

"You don't have to believe that, dear father; Titus is the main character, he is more than the legate Severius Silvanus, for he is the Emperor Gallienus himself. But you mustn't let anyone know that you know!"

"The proud oath-father, who gave all to the nations!" The king's every limb shook, but the fact that he himself had sent him to the dungeon now robbed him of his breath and movement. He stared open-mouthed at his little daughter, and it may have dawned on him that a bushel full of grasshoppers was easier to look after than a beautiful girl.

"Attal! What are you staring at? Do you see a moon calf?" asked Mrs. Hildebirga, half worried, half annoyed; she added with a sigh: "Yes, it's always like that. Now you're sorry. If you had asked me ---"

But Herr Attal had not seen a moon calf, nor had he heard his wife Hildebirga's sighing speech, but had come to a decision himself. He jumped up hastily and ordered his wife and daughter to follow him immediately to the Spindelberg. Dudar, the steward, was to see to it that the horses and the property of the Roman guests were put at their free disposal again.

The queen wanted to continue the broken thread of her angry speech, but the king whispered a few explanatory words in her ear, which had a magical effect on Frau Hildebirga's mind.

If the royal spouses had previously worn highly apprehensive expressions, these were now followed by equally highly satisfied ones, which were only marred by a quietly warning, anxious expression.

The three of them set off immediately for the Spielberg. But Pipara had not even thought of the faithful Walpurgis. When love for a man enters a girl's heart, she leaves her playmate, her siblings, her father and mother, for she knows only one sun, and this one sun, this one god is the man she loves.

But woe to the man who disregards this divine gift, who does not know

how to cultivate this heavenly flower of love! Double, double woe to the man who does not know how to find it! Three times, three times woe to the man who passes by this love for the sake of filthy lucre and finds a woman only for the dowry!

*****

Gallienus lay in the pillows in a dull brood; his pain had snapped. Gentle grief had put a softening veil around his senses, only the glimmer of hope for Pipara's love shone before his heart, like Pharus to the night skipper.

Then the huge oak bar rumbled in front of the door and it burst open. Gallienus was used to that, so he didn't even look. But when two soft arms wrapped themselves around his neck and a soft pile of golden silk fell on his eyes, and burning kisses sealed his words, he could have cheered, for he knew that it was Pipara who was close to his heart.

"My poor Gallienus, how you have been played with!" said Pipara, caressing him. "You had to forfeit your freedom for my sake!"

"But how glad I am to have suffered a little for you, good Pipara! Only here did I learn how dear you are to me. And yet, how terrible was my imprisonment because, I, who wanted to help you, was rendered powerless!"

The emperor said this, his eyes resting joyfully on the golden-haired girl's head. Then he continued:

"And you? What did you think? Was I also just your one thought? Or were you happy to be kidnapped?"

There was a flash in Pipara's blue eye; she said quickly:

"Then I would certainly not be sitting here on your bed to free you myself! Nor did I feel at the sight of any man what I felt when I saw and heard you in the little tree garden. I was supposed to be married to Cousin Hanold, but it was an abomination to him to hear how things stood between you and I. But now he is dead, and even if he were not, I would take no one else as my husband but you! I too shook and trembled to lose you; I too fought to the death with this wild cousin for my freedom, but he was stronger than I was. He mounted me on his horse and galloped away. I

scratched, I bit, I struck, I kicked with my feet, but he only laughed and acted as if I were a willful, capricious child. So we went deeper into the forest. The disgraceful man rode up to a sanctuary, lied to the warden - an old, ugly, wicked woman, lied about you and asked her for magic protection against you! The old woman refused to take me in for fear of my father's punishment, but her advice was wicked. She pointed out a cave in the mountains where I was to find shelter, a cave which was of such a nature that any escape would be impossible. The knave of shame let me down there on a rope after I had made a desperate but unsuccessful struggle. I was in the dark for a long time; I couldn't tell the time. Then I sat down and wept, and thought of you, and hoped you would save me, and kept shouting no and no and no, when I remembered the bad words Hanold had said to me about you, and which he had exchanged with Albruna about you!"

"Poor, poor Pipara! And I have been lying here helpless and abandoned, unable to help you, for many days!"

The emperor had said this with warmth, kissing Pipara's golden hair, stroking her hands and gazing tenderly into her face with glowing eyes. But the royal child smiled mischievously, wagged her finger and said:

"Galli, Galli! Lying was one of the other nice things they said about you! You only came here yesterday and it's not as late now as it was yesterday when I was kidnapped and you were locked in here. But now you are free, now follow me! But I beg of you, don't hold it against my good father that he went astray in fear and wild pain! Is it true, Galli, that you do not seek revenge? Promise me and follow me!"

With that, Pipara jumped from the emperor's bed, where she was sitting, and wanted to pull him up too. But Gallienus pulled her gently to his side and said, while his glowing eyes glided around her with a dark fire:

"I'm not following you yet, beloved!"

"Why, Galli, are you angry? It is a lie that you have hardly spent day and night here; it is a mistake, and for my sake you will--"

"Silence about it, dear girl, it is forgiven and forgotten, and if I had lain here a year. I have you again and call you mine and myself yours! But I won't follow you yet! Go on --"

He gently put his arms around her neck and gazed passionately into her eyes. His breath came in gasps, and his voice trembled softly as he urged: "Go on, my only love!"

Resting her hands in his, Pipara began:

"Yes, it was in the cave. It was dark there; I didn't dare take a step. Hanold promised to fetch a fire and provide food and drink. I also thought that days had passed and that I would die of hunger. Then I was startled and delighted by distant torchlight. Three ghostly women were floating towards me, or so I thought. But they were the three good maids of a neighboring sanctuary, whose earthen stable was connected by passages to the cave that was my dungeon. The good maids came, much to my happiness. They took me to another room and promised to keep an eye out for me so that I could escape Hanold's persecution. Then they met my father, and so I am here with you again, my dear! Now get up and follow me!"

Pipara wanted to jump up again, but Gallienus pulled her passionately to his chest.

Pipara pressed a fervent kiss to his lips, then wriggled out of his passionate embrace. With a wistful, sad look at Pipara, the emperor sank back into the pillows. He had thought he saw a mocking smile playing around his beloved's sweet little mouth. That hurt him, although this pain inflamed his ardor even more.

"Come, my love, come to freedom! My comrades and my parents have been waiting for you for a long time; come!"

In the round hall with the altar in the middle, the same place where Albruna and the queen had questioned the riddle about the kidnapper, the now freed prisoners met; they greeted each other with joyful expressions.

The king shook hands with the legate Severinus Silvanus over the blue flame of the altar, and made a precious oath, telling him that he did not mean to insult Rome or them all, but only to save them from the fury of the people, and other such sweet words. The legate, who had cast a questioning glance at Titus, was satisfied with this explanation, and so the potion of reconciliation was drunk.

The king and queen had certainly noticed how Severinus had looked at

Gallienus before answering and only made his declaration of reconciliation after repeated beckoning from him.

*****

They sat in the hall again, as on the first day of the guests' arrival, but the queen left much earlier than usual with Pipara and the maidens. Gallienus was concerned about this and soon went to his camp with the other Romans.

He had not yet revealed himself to the king, which is why he was the last of the Romans to sit at the table and did not come into contact with Pipara.

The next day there was great excitement at the royal court. Where is Walpurgis? This question flew from mouth to mouth. Old Babo came desperately to the king and queen and demanded his child. He thought that the Romans had kidnapped his child because the king's daughter had been taken away from them. No amount of pleading helped to calm the worried Babo; his accusations against the Romans became ever more vehement. King Attal had a hard time, for he too was unable to counter Babo's claims with anything factual.

Then the rampart guard's horn sounded. Everyone rushed to the rampart to escape the hand-wringing Babo. He staggered after them.

But how astonished everyone was when they saw a number of horsemen, led by the burgrave Skaramunt and Walpurgis on horseback, waiting to be let in.

They were admitted without wasting another word.

In the hall, Skaramunt delivered the report of what had happened outside Meliodunum and how heroically Walpurgis had shown herself.

There was no staying in Eburodunum any longer. They prepared to leave to celebrate the burning of the fallen Roman's body.

*****

In the midst of this turmoil, however, Gallienus had taken the opportunity to surprise Pipara in her bower. She was delighted and frightened at the same time. Ever since the one kiss in the Spielberg's underground passageway, she had been wary of Gallienus.

Again he had embraced her and kissed her wildly; this was no longer the tender love of the bridegroom, the girl suspected. Gallienus' forehead glowed, his voice sounded hoarse, broken, trembling: "Soon, sweet Pipa, I must go away! I must not make myself known! Shall I ride without comfort?"

"Am I to remain here without comfort?" said Pipara, trembling and blushing. Then she added, sobbing: "You are, Gallienus, my house, my father, my mother, my everything! I hope and rely on you, but I am a Germanic woman! Only those who call me by my married name have the right to embrace me!" And she cried again.

"And I will greet you with my married name, dear one! But remember, I am emperor! Will you be my second wife?"

The blush on Pipara's face had given way to the pallor of death; she stared at the Roman with a stony stare:

"Gallienus! I am a German king's daughter! Are you ashamed to have such a one as your first, your only wife?" She did not finish the sentence. A feverish chill shook through her bones; a fit of weeping had seized her.

"Pipa, sweet Pipa!" cried the frightened man. "Pipa, not far from Rome, under the shady palms, by the merrily rippling fountains, there is a splendid palace, which I will give you; there you are queen, you are empress, my empress; but no Roman must know about it, for they would murder you!"

"Go, go, coward!" cried Pipara, beside himself.

"Sweet, good Pipa!" pleaded the Roman and knelt before the royal child, covering her hands with kisses. Tears glimmered in his eyes.

"If you don't have the courage to openly declare me your wife and defend me as such, then you don't love me. So go! Also take this with you on your

way: the German woman loves only one man, but also demands of this one man that he has no other wife besides her. We only know of marriages between a man and a woman; we do not know of second wives. We call them concubines and despise them. The father of the gods, Wuotan himself, would come and tell you that a Germanic king's child is too good to be anyone's concubine. So go!"

She stood proudly before him, her hand raised imperiously towards the direction where the exit opened.

The emperor was still kneeling.

"And if I tell your father that I, the Emperor Gallienus, ask for your hand, if I go before my people and say that this Germanic woman is your Caesarina Augusta, and if Juno Pronuba unites us before Hymen's altar, and if I shield and cover you with my love, if I promise you all this, what answer will your heart have?"

He had taken her hand again. He looked up at her with tear-filled eyes. Her bosom was heaving with emotion; she tried to push back the tears and pull her hand out of the emperor's. With the other hand she fought back. She fought him off with her hand; she had no words.

Then he jumped up and embraced her trembling form.

"Pipa, no answer!?"

He had shouted this in extreme pain, in a voice that wounded Pipara's soul like a dagger.

"I have heard too much of the abominable from you - I could not, would not believe it - now I must believe it, I may want to or not. -- Otherwise you would have spoken to me!"

Convulsive sobs interrupted these words, which Pipara uttered only intermittently.

"And if all this were true, Pipa, do you not believe in the power of love? Do you not believe that the love which gives me the courage, the strength to defy the prejudice of the entire world empire, that this same love does not have the power to show you to me as my goddess and to cleanse me of everything that clung to me before I knew you?"

Gallienus had spoken these words with rapturous fervor, using every

trick in the book to soothe an offended but lovesick woman's temper. A stream of hot tears, a flood of gentle reproaches, pleas and representations had eased Pipara's heart, and Gallienus had given in everywhere. Thus the heavy clouds in the bright spring sky of love gradually began to disperse, Pipara's eyes smiled again with tears, and a hot, heartfelt, long-simmering kiss reunited the two.

*****

Outside in the courtyard, the horses were already pawing, saddled for the ride to Meliodunum. The Romans and Teutons sat ready to travel in the great hall of the royal court. The king and queen sat on the high seat under their crowns. Pipara also joined them, only Titus was missing.

Then he entered. A murmur of astonishment ran through the ranks of the Teutons, of shock through the Romans. But they immediately jumped up from their seats and bowed their knees to the man who had entered; the king's men did the same. Attal had also jumped up and rushed to meet his guest, welcoming him with a handshake and a kiss of peace.

No longer in the simple garb of Titus, but in a purple cloak and a radiant crown, he had entered, Caesar Gallienus, semper Augustus, the Emperor of Rome.

He had quickly approached Pipara, wrapped his purple cloak around the blushing woman, pressed a kiss to her lips in front of everyone and called out:

"So then, Caesar Gallienus Augustus, I woo your child, King Attal! Give her to me as my wife, I will make her Empress of Rome! Henceforth there shall be peace between Rome and Germania, both shall be husband and wife, just as Gallienus and Pipara!"

Loud cheers resounded through the hall, only the Romans remained silent, dismayed, ashamed. Roma had sunk so far that a barbarian woman could be elevated to Domina Augusta!

The Romans sent threatening glances over to the radiant Pipara, who was too happy to have noticed them.

King Attal, however, had thoughtfully drained his mead horn, handed the emptied horn to the tavern to exchange it for a full one, then gracefully twisted his beard into two points and then spoke to the emperor in a benevolent tone:

"Your word, Caesar Gallienus, met with my approval, be welcome to me as my daughter's husband! Now hear my royal word, after the father has spoken: My sword and the sword of my people is yours. Rest be granted to the Romans on the Danube as long as you and your heirs sit on the throne of the Caesars, for Rome I will keep watch on the Danube. This is my royal word, now let it be heard, your imperial word. You determine the purchase of the bride."

Severinus Silvanus quickly jumped up, rushed to his emperor and wanted to whisper something in his ear, but Gallienus stood up proudly and gave the intruder a commanding look that forced the raging legate back to his seat more clearly than words. Two other Romans, Venerianus, a legionary tribune, and Palphurnius Sura, the emperor's secret scribe, whispered excitedly to each other. The former sneered, the latter sent venomous glances at the emperor, as if at his bride.

Proudly erect, returning all these expressions of defiant hatred with contemptuous glances, the emperor stood, every inch an emperor.

"Give, hand me a freshly filled horn, but let it foam from the fiery source of Massika! The emperor of Rome wants to answer the king of the Marcomanni and the Quads!"

Then one of the Romans jumped up and ran away; he soon returned with two ivory drinking horns. They were richly carved and plated with gold on the inside. Dark golden yellow massif, the pearl of all the wines of Caesarian Rome, sparkled out of them.

The Germanic tribes had never seen such drinking horns before. The emperor presented one horn to the king, and as he raised the other, he spoke the words:

"The drink from the fiery spring of native vines is for you, King of the Marchmen and the Quads, for you, the father of Pipara, for you, the Emperor of Rome's father-in-law! Let what you said be true; you will guard

Rome's Danubian border. That was your royal word; now hear my imperial word! A whole kingdom will I give thee, for only such is the most worthy bride purchase for thy golden-curled child! - The land around my province of Valeria is yours! Yours, as far as it is bounded by the Danubius (Danube), the Drau and the Leitha. Only the colonies, the municipalities and the castles remain with Rome. You may settle this land with the second-born of your people; your second-born Wiltahar may be your sub-king there. In return, you will preserve the Danube line for Rome against the Goths and Jazygians and renounce the alliance with the Alemanni and all other peoples hostile to Rome! This, King Attalus, is my imperial word! This potion marks the treaty as an indissoluble one!"

After these words, he raised the horn to his mouth with his left hand, while he held out his right hand to the Quade king to strike it.

"This is how it will be and no other way!" the latter shouted, struck the imperial right hand with a strong handshake and, also raising his horn to his mouth with his left, drank it empty at the same time as the emperor. Then both threw their drinking horns aside, embraced each other, and a long kiss of friendship sealed the contract anew. To make it even stronger, King Attal unsheathed his sword and handed it to his imperial friend with the words:

"You shall carry this, my future oath-partner, to know that my sword and my sword-wielders are yours from now on!"

Caesar Gallienus took the sword. He also unsheathed his own and handed it to the king, saying:

"And so then, Quaden King, henceforth faithfully wield the sword of the Emperor of Rome. You are ours, we are your support, and all the enemies of the world are powerless against our alliance."

The treaty was concluded. Rome voluntarily offered what the Quade had often asked for peacefully but in vain, and what he had often asked for with varying degrees of success, namely land for settlement by the abundance of his population.

The Germanic tribes greeted this "imperial word" jubilantly, only the Romans sat dejected; they felt that this treaty tasted like a lost battle. Unnoticed by the loudly cheering Teutons, the Romans whispered among

themselves about the incident.

"Unheard-of disgrace!" said Palphurnius Sura quietly. "The harlot barely worthy of a slave is to become Augusta! Any dancer from Hiberia, any singer from Achaia would be more worthy! She's even too bad to be a concubine! But Empress, Caesaress, Augusta, Goddess!"

Palphurnius had whispered this to Venerianus, trembling with passionate anger. The more moderate replied with a shrug:

"Let the emperor have his way, the treaty is good and favorable for Rome today! And the Caesaress?"

These words were accompanied by a lazy smile and a disdainful wave of the hand.

"And the Caesaress? She can die when the time comes. I do not fear that the Emperor means his word in earnest, but I fear even less that he will keep his promises seriously. He will rejoice in these doings, he can be granted that, but then the Adriatic will have enough water to quench the golden child's thirst for Tartarus. Then Domina Galliena will be on the throne soon enough!"

"Unless one of her gladiator lovers pushes his sword a few inches too deep between the ribs of the unfaithful one!" chuckled Palphurnius maliciously.

"After all! Caesar Valerianus hasn't given his vote yet," said another.

"He will give it! Be smart, fellow students!" was clever Venerianus' rejoinder.

*****

Kadolt and Annius had stayed behind in Meliodunum to pay their last respects to Gemellus, who had been shot. The cunning girl Walpurgis had concealed from Kadolt and the Romans the fact that those they were looking for were imprisoned, and had told only the castle count what she knew, what she hoped for and feared.

In order to atone for Gemellus' death, he had had a funeral pyre erected at his own expense on the Wuotan bed in the stronghold[1], so that Gemellus' ashes would be buried in a sacred place and his memory would never perish. In order to reconcile his men, he had asked Annius to arrange everything that the cremation of the corpse required according to Roman custom.

So everything was prepared. The body of the slain man was laid in the market square of the stronghold on a bed of oak and fir trees, dressed in his armor, the various decorations lying on his chest.

The body was now found by Caesar, who had ridden into Meliodunum, as well as the king and his entourage.

Annius was astonished to see his imperial friend in full regalia, but incurable horror seized him when he learned why this had happened.

What a woman she must be who could captivate a Gallienus, who could move a Gallienus to defy the entire empire, the society of Rome so unwisely! To offer defiance at a time when the whole state seemed to be falling apart at the seams.

Annius also comforted himself with the hope of a temporary passion and a speedy change in the situation through Gaul's medicine chest. After all, Kadolt had tried a little potion from it.

Since Gallienus was traveling as Caesar Augustus, two horsemen carried the fasces before him; the small procession also arranged itself more ceremonially, to which the stately royal retinue then lent the right splendor.

Thus the cavalcade appeared before the dead centurion Gemellus.

The emperor himself delivered the funeral oration from his horse, then took the usual ferry fare for Charon and placed it in the corpse's mouth. It was a silver Gallienus coin.

The spoils and ancestors of the deceased were also taken care of. The horsemen and servants of Annius had to present the latter, although they lacked the necessary face masks.

Several venerable senators and other dignitaries preceded the corpse, presenting the procession of the deceased's ancestors as they caught up with

[1] Today the Basilius Hill in Olomouc. During recent excavations, a slag was found there that came from a cremation. This slag enclosed a charred bone and a coin of the Emperor Gallienus.

their youngest family member to the underworld. Then came his slaves, carrying his spoils and trophies. As these were not at hand, Annius procured ample replacements to honor the deceased all the more. As is well known, praise and blame are only too happy to overstep the boundaries of truth. The good Gemellus, even though as a centurion he was somewhat presumptuous when it came to recounting his heroic deeds, as was his station, might still have been ashamed had he witnessed his funeral and seen his "spolia", i.e. the spoils presented to his bier. They would have been worthy of an Alexander. There were at least a dozen names of cities, carried on poles like standards, all of which he had conquered, then a number of names of kings or famous heroes whom he was supposed to have defeated in battle.

Some of those named here may have lived just as little as the advancing ancestors whose names and dignities were invented for the sake of pomp.

The emperor and the others all walked behind the bier.

The emperor lit the pyre on the Wuotansbett with his own hand. Soon the corpse fire flared up. The glowing embers consumed the mortal part of the slain man. Finally the corpse fire collapsed and broke into the pit over which it had been artificially piled. Smoldering embers, individual logs still flickering, filled the pit; acrid haze and puffing smoke swirled up from it, twisting into columns of smoke. Then the pit was thrown shut and the Wuotansbett leveled again. The dead Roman had been given the most noble grave that Germanic soil could offer him; he had been buried in the burnt altar of the king of the gods himself. Numerous sacrifices glowed over his grave through the centuries that followed, until victorious Christianity banished the decrepit king of the gods, so that he now, himself wounded, raced through the air as the "wild hunter".

They had returned to Eburodunum in order to march from there to Carnuntum to join the army, after the recruited auxiliary peoples had been told the day on which they were to join the army.

Annius had taken it upon himself to bring the emperor Valerian the news of the events in Eburodunum, as well as the news of the army's imminent arrival at Mursia.

So the day had come for Gallienus and Pipara to part.

The parting was difficult for both of them, but Pipara heroically forced back her tears. An army commander's bride had to be just as brave as he was; complaining was only appropriate for maids and serving women. High courage was the prerogative of queens.

Gallienus kissed his bride again and then swiftly mounted his horse.

King Attal and eleven of his noblest Marcomanni escorted the future bridegroom to the boundary stone of Eburodunum's district.

There the men parted with a handshake; Attal rode home by himself.

Now the journey was prepared to take possession of the new kingdom. Never had a military expedition been more cheerfully prepared than this one. A new kingdom had been conquered without the chain mail of a single hero being reddened.

“Heilo! To a merry march!”

The emperor lit the pyre on Wuotan's bed with his own hand.
Book 1, Chapter 5, Page 97

Sixth Adventure

How Caesar Gallienus Rejoined the Army

Caesar Gallienus Augustus had returned to the camp at Carnuntum. He was not particularly pleased when he realized how his absence had been misinterpreted; but he became downright angry when he learned how Domina Galliena was mourning him. The reunion of the two fiancées had therefore been strictly in accordance with the old-fashioned ceremonial, after which the emperor had most respectfully escorted his betrothed bride to Carnuntum and had given her lodgings there in the Hibernum Castrum. He then wrote her a letter full of praise for the devotion and loyalty she had shown him, but strongly advised her not to stay in a military camp in the future, as such actions would definitely jeopardize the good reputation of an unmarried young domina. Gallienus had seen to it that copies of this letter were circulated in Carnuntum. The evil world laughed, Galliena seethed with rage. But as she could not and was not allowed to vent this rage against her fiancé, she found the merchants' guild of Carnuntum as a welcome target for her vengefulness. The ungrateful were to pay for joining her mockers. She wanted to take revenge on them; Caesar Gallienus was to lend her his arm in order to make himself odious to the Carnuntians.

She therefore did not let the emperor realize how his scorn hurt her, but sought every opportunity to approach him, although she never overstepped the bounds of court ceremonial and thus forced him to do her bidding.

In this way, she managed to ensure that the emperor granted the Carnunters several arena games to celebrate his happy return.

These were hastily prepared. When the preparations were in full swing,

Galliena complained to the emperor how she had been badly cheated by the Carnival merchants. She demanded that the swindlers be punished. This was very annoying for the emperor. He could not reject the complaint because Galliena was suing as a Roman citizen, and justice had to be done because, as Caesar Augustus, he was the supreme upholder of Roman law. However, he gave the aediles of Carnuntum a hand; they let many a man of honor slip through the wide-open meshes of Roman law, but some had played a little too boldly with the mourner. The fraud was clear and so five convictions followed. Of these five, the first in rank was the honest Parthian Merapis. - He had seen fit to sell worthless rivers of glass for real gems to the empress of all queens, the most beautiful of all beauties. The Curul-Aedil, who was legally responsible for organizing the public games, grabbed these five doomed men with a greedy hand, for he needed bestiarii for the lion. So the five clever merchants were delivered to him by law.

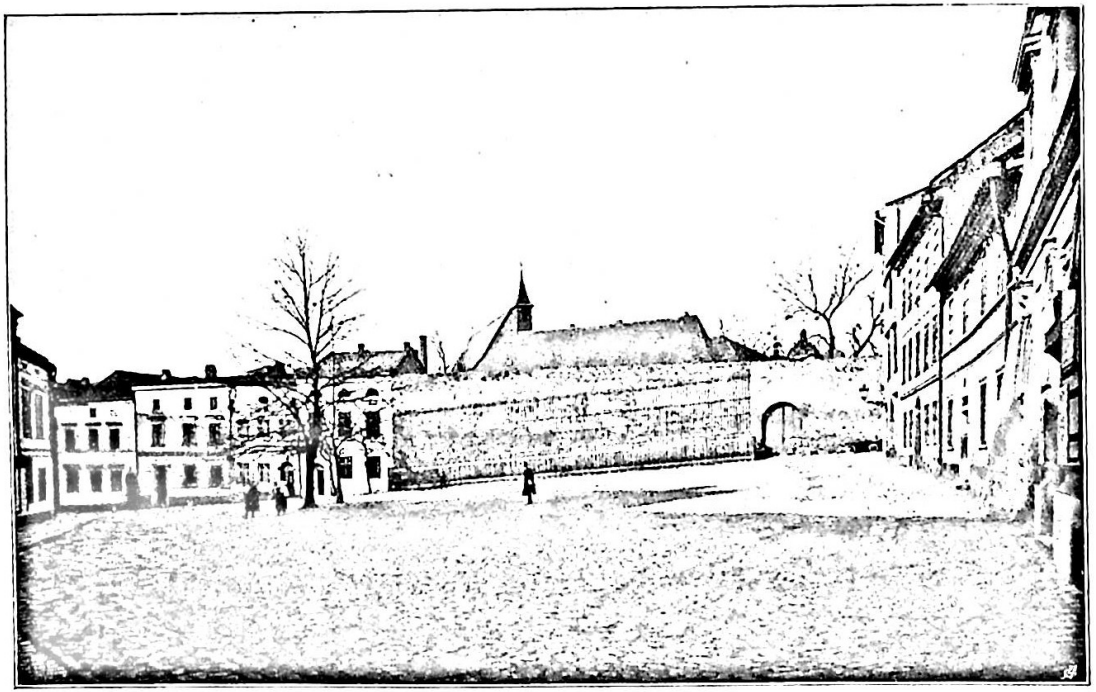
That spoiled the fun for the Carnunters. Why should those who pay taxes be placed to fight in the arena? Then for what purpose were there slaves or prisoners of war? No citizen could be sure of his life if such speculations made him fit for the arena!

Gallienus was in the greatest embarrassment. He could not show mercy, but neither could he confirm the severity of the sentence. It was a wicked trick that his Galliena had played on him. For a long time he pondered in vain for a way out. But a Gallienus was not so easy to defeat; he soon found a way out.

*****

The match days had arrived. The whole of Carnuntum surged towards the arena, but the desire to watch had not completely overcome the embarrassing feeling that the citizens of Carnuntum were about to step into the arena.

With imperial pomp the Caesar marched to the arena; next to him sat the proud Galliena, adorned with jewels, in the state carriage. Today she was friendlier than ever. The people greeted the emperor with tumultuous cheers, for they were being fed with wine, meat and bread at his expense for the



The Blasinsplatz (Basiliusberg) in Olomouc, formerly Meliodunum, where excavations uncovered a coin of Gallienus fused to a jawbone. Reproduced with permission from Mr. Th. Knaute, Director of Public Schools in Olomouc; based on a photograph by Carl Pietzner. Book 1, Chapter 5, Page 97.

duration of the games. Panem et circenses! Bread and games! That was the watchword of the day, as it was the great magic formula of Roman statesmanship. But as much as the common people cheered, the landowners remained silent, but Gallienus did not seem to notice.

"My emperor and cousin!" Galliena said to the emperor as a maliciously inquiring gaze swept over him. "My imperial fiancé! Is it not sad to see how justice is despised, and how the exalted guardian of justice is hated because he administers it? Do you see the looks on the faces of the citizens of Carnuntum? A few days ago they were cheering you, divine one, and now they want to murder you with looks of hatred!"

"That is the custom of the world, illustrious princess!" said the emperor calmly. "So it is with every just judge; neither of the two parties whose dispute he settles is satisfied; both submit to the judgment, but remain unreconciled. Justice has never satisfied me; but I will investigate to find the reason why the two disputants remain unreconciled after the award! Then I will try to reconcile instead of judging!"

"How exalted my future husband thinks!" said the princess with a slight hint of mockery, playing with her fan.

Gallienus did not seem to feel this mockery either. With the most authoritative smile he said to the princess:

"For a Caesar Augustus, dear base, there is no greater happiness than to learn how his predestined consort also considers serious questions of governmental affairs! What a support for the happy husband of the future!"

Perhaps Galliena would have continued this little covert exchange had the chariot not just stopped in front of the portico of the arena. The praetorians took their seats; the people cheered. The palanquin bearers approached to carry the emperor and the princess to the podium.

The imperial palanquin floated past in front of a barred box containing those condemned to death in the arena. In front of it were onlookers and those who wanted to plead for mercy for the condemned. The moment when the imperial palanquin was carried past was the last anchor of hope for the condemned. If they were denied imperial clemency then, they had nothing more to hope for in this life.

The stone-shaking wailing now became even louder. The unfortunates shook the iron bars and screamed for mercy. From outside came the howling of the reveling people, mingled with the roaring of the desert beasts, who had been provoked to fury by several days of hunger. It took the nerve of a Roman to pass by here coldly.

The Parthian Merapis stood there, his face contorted with fear. He screamed and howled, but the others screamed and howled too, both those in the cage and their relatives in front of it. None of the words came out, and yet everyone understood this terrible cry of fear; it meant the tiny word: "Mercy!"

Then Galliena wept; she raised her hands in supplication and knelt before the emperor as the palanquin was carried past the cage. Gallienus remained cold, but he could not suppress a mocking smile. He was only too well aware that Galliena's request had been made so conspicuously in order to lay the blame for the death of the condemned citizens of Carnuntum solely on him, the emperor, and to consign him to the hatred of the colony. But Gallienus had smiled mockingly, not embarrassed! Galliena did not yet know the cause of this smile, so she misunderstood it and disregarded it, for she still thought her ruse had succeeded.

The games were in full swing. The chariot races were over; the blues had won. The rows of seats were filled with a tremendous babble of voices, as the bets that had been made were now being settled. The gladiator fights in various forms had also ended. Here and there the sand was reddened with blood. The shouting of the bettors had stopped. Silence fell.

Gallienus sat on his throne with the overwhelming splendor of Caesar Augustus. His expression was icy cold. This must be the face of the implacable master of fate up in Olympos, to whom what he decides is inevitable.

Then the iron gates on one side opened and four of the condemned Carnunter merchants entered the blood-soaked sand, whipped in by arena slaves.

They wore the clothes they had worn in Carnuntum. This aroused unwilling murmurs. The merchants' guild wanted to see this as a disgrace

done to them. And if they had been thrust before the lions in slave costume or naked, that would have been criticized too. The good Carnunter knew only too well that the four down there were no better and no worse than most of those sitting up there in the favored rows of seats, who felt rather queasy at this warning example. It is not so easy for a politician to draw the line conscientiously between lawful acquisition and reprehensible or criminal self-interest, caused by greed and avarice.

This time the condemned were left to wait for the beasts longer than usual. Unable to move, they stood there in the horrible prison. No one moved, no one uttered a sound; the horror had made them dull. The arena would have been silent as the grave had it not been for the howls of the predators that shook the air. The citizens of Carnuntum sat trembling, pale with clenched fists, awaiting the terrible spectacle they had not dared to stay away from.

Then the tubas blared. A cry of horror ran through the room; this tuba fanfare was well known. Normally, those who were now shaking and screaming as if they were in the arena themselves applauded at this sign.

Then the gates on the other side of the arena opened and four roosters ran in, cheeping[1]. The four condemned men collapsed in shock, but arena slaves forced them to take up the fight with the chickens.

Then an imperial herald appeared in the arena. After commanding silence with his tuba blower, he spoke:

"These four criminals were cheats. They were sentenced to death in the arena. Such is the sentence of the judge. But like shall be rewarded and punished with like. They are deceivers, therefore they shall be deceived. They expected to fight a lion, but to their shame they will have to fight these capons!"

The herald left the room. Arena slaves came and whipped those who had been pardoned out of the arena with scourges.

The emperor sat on his throne like a stone image, like the all-mocking

1 Historical. Trebellio Pollio, Imperial History

Jupiter Serapis; there was nothing but dark defiance in his expression. Domina Galliena turned pale and trembled with rage. Her fan splintered at her feet.

The Carnuntians were still silent, still. The devastating mockery did not allow them to feel the incomparable comedy of the performance, for the pardoned were nevertheless condemned. But at least they felt relieved; none of Carnuntum's blood had soaked the sand yet. But the fifth of the five?

He came staggering in now. What was that? He was carrying weapons? A hunting spear and a long pointed sword? Since when did the bestiaries sentenced to death get weapons?

Then the other gate opened - a tame ox strode piously and good-naturedly into the arena.

The audience could no longer contain itself. Whinnying laughter echoed through the rows of seats, and the poor bullfighter had to reap scorn and ridicule, especially when it was realized that the bull was his draught ox and was very intimate with his former master. He too was forced to fight.

The citizens of Carnival forgot the dishonor that had been done to them and roared with applause whenever the bullfighter tackled the ox and missed. The pseudo-arena beast didn't take offense at this and seemed to think it was a game, as his master had probably once wielded the bullwhip more confidently than he did the spit today. After the tenth failed blow, arena slaves stepped between the fighters and separated them amid loud laughter.

The man could hardly make sense of the laughter; he did not know what to do because of his bewildering fear. Then the same herald came and placed a golden crown on the astonished Bestiarius' head; then he said:

"This crown is sent to you by our exalted Caesar. Failing to hit an ox ten times is an unrivaled, crowning feat that only a swindler can achieve! Go home quietly, you too have been cheated like the others!"

Leaning on his lance, the mocked crown bearer staggered out of the arena. Now a storm of applause broke out. Busy tongues spread the rumor that the emperor wanted to show mercy without violating the sentence. The full hatred of Carnuntum now struck the head of the princess.

Galliena was defeated. The next day, brooding evil, she traveled to Rome.

These four criminals were cheatss...
Book 1, Chapter 6, Page 107.

*****

The Hilfsvölker [helping-people, untrained men hoping to join the Legion] had gathered and joined Caesar Gallienus' army. He had supplemented the Legions with the able-bodied ones, and then formed so-called auxiliary cohorts from the less able, one of which he gave to Kadolt to lead. The emperor had learned to appreciate his merits, which is why he appointed the Quadish Marcoman as centurion. It is understandable that Kadolt did not get off his horse.

"These are evil deeds and their consequences will be evil!" Caesar Valerianus had said to his son Caesar Gallienus when they had embraced again after a long separation. The voice of the aged emperor sounded benevolent and mild as he spoke these words to his son, as if he wanted to avoid hurting him. The son replied with a sense of conviction in his gesture and tone of voice:

"Best of all fathers! Let me ask you to believe that my actions were planned for the good of the empire! How difficult it was for Rome to defeat the Alemanni before Ravenna; gold, more than iron, won the victory there. But the Alemanni and the Quads are only one people under different names. Their kings, however, belong to the tribe of the Saxons and call themselves Marcomanni, i.e. the horsemen, because the Marcomanni are the nobility, the others the folk. I learned this when I traveled unrecognized through Germania. There I saw that the kings are acting in concert against Rome, and that is why the war against Rome is raging between Hiberia and the Pontus Euxinus[2]. Rome, or at least its European provinces as far as Ravenna, would be untenable if I had not succeeded in concluding an alliance with King Attalus. He is like a wedge between the Alemanni and the Goths. I knew how to make good use of his jealousy of King Ostrogota. The strip of Pannonia that I ceded to him means no loss for Rome, since the forts and roads are secured for Rome. He will colonize the flat land, good. After a

2 Between Spain and the Black Sea.

while, when Rome is strong enough again, the Quade king will become a proconsul in Pannonia, that's all. But today we have secured the Danube and thus saved Rome from ruin, from plundering, from destruction! Father, I hope that you too will recognize that this is a major victory for statesmanship, for Rome has been saved and the Danube secured. But even more important is the fact that the strength of the Teutons has been broken."

Caesar Gallienus was silent; the aged Valerianus bowed his head thoughtfully, then he said with warmth, taking his son's hand and raising his eyes to those of Gallienus, who calmly passed his fatherly gaze:

"Only beloved son! You have accomplished great things, indeed you have saved the empire from destruction, but instead of idolizing you and building triumphal gates for you, you will be thrown over the Tarpeian rock because you intend to choose a barbarian woman as your wife! Don't do that, my son, don't hurt the vanity of Rome so deeply, offer this unfortunate love to the fatherland, and grateful Rome will erect a golden statue of you on the Esquilinus, larger than the Pharus of Alexandria!"

But deep sorrow spoke from the son's eyes, which had not avoided his father's. Then Gallienus said in an agitated voice:

“Father, have you never loved!”

“Then how could you be my son?”

"And yet you can not only think this terrible thought, but also speak it, speak it to me, your son!"

"My fatherly duty commands me to warn you! Remember, Rome was nursed by she-wolves, but it is the wolf's way to tear their benefactors to pieces! Remember that you are emperor and your posthumous glory must be sacred to you!"

"Without Pipara's love I would be a shadow, but with her I am a god!"

"Well, my son!" replied the father mildly, "I am defeated; in my heart I feel with you...It was only with difficulty that I was able to speak to you like this. May the dice of fate roll!"

Father and son embraced in each other's arms for a long time.

*****

The army was put on display. It was a proud force that Gallienus had created. He had trained them well on the long marches and also provided them with good provisions, so that the troops were completely ready to fight. Venerianus was entrusted with the supreme command of part of the army, which he was to lead against the Goths and Jazygians in order to liberate Macedonia, Achaia and possibly also the Asian landscapes opposite from the enemy. Venerianus had laid his hand on the shoulder of the secret scribe Palphurnius and whispered in his ear:

"If you always rebuke the emperor, you will always remain a literary man. You must do this wisely, my friend, and you will become Procurator! [The Emperor's manager of imperial estates, finance and taxes]"

The legate Aureolus received the second third of the army with orders to lead it across the Brennus to Mediolanum, to occupy the Alpine passes and thus to keep watch against the Alemanni.

The third third remained under the command of the two emperors, as a kind of mobile corps.

*****

That very day Caesar Gallienus was lying on a couch in a room of the Hibernum Castrum Mursias. Palphurnius Sura, the emperor's literary adviser, was sitting at a table; writing implements covered the table.

"Exalted Caesar," said the secret scribe, looking up from the table, "the letters have been written. There is the one to the tribune Claudius in Ticinum[3]."

"Send this letter to the legate Aureolus. He is leading part of the army to Mediolanum[4] and may give this letter to Claudius as his superior."

The secret scribe folded the letter and wrote on the outside: "Caesar

3 Today, Pavia, Italy.

4 Today, Milan, Italy.

Gallienus Augustus to the tribune Claudius in Mediolanum through the legate Aureolus." Then he took another letter. This went through the imperial messenger riders. This was a state institution similar to our postal service, which was only organized for the government, not civilians. It was addressed to Cassius Latinus Posthumus, the prefect of the Gentis Germanorum at Trivirorum[5]. Several more similar letters followed. Finally it was the turn of the last one.

"It is written to Princess Galliena, illustrious emperor," said Palphurnius and wanted to close the door quickly.

"Let me read it myself, Sura," the emperor ordered; Palphurnius had to obey. He handed the letter to Gallienus. The emperor read it through and tore it up.

"Sit down and write as I will tell you."

Palphurnius took a fresh sheet of parchment, sharpened his pen and awaited the emperor's dictation.

Gallienus ran his fingers through his thick black curls, which shone with gold powder, and began his dictation:

"Caesar Gallienus semper Augustus to his dear little Domina Galliena! Heart-warming greetings beforehand. You will still remember what we spoke in the carriage when we drove to the arena at Carnuntum, my dear little bear. At that time I recognized your talent for governmental affairs and learned to admire it. This gift of the heavenly ones must not be lost to the state. I therefore ask you, my dear, to embark for Africa as soon as you receive this letter and to take up residence there in the imperial colony of Sicca Veneria in the country of Numidia, where Celsus, the proconsul of Africa, is in charge of the government, until further notice. It was not an easy task for me to choose a place for you to stay that is perfectly suited to your beautiful talents. I am happy to have found it for you and I am sure that I deserve your thanks for this care. The temple of Venus there is famous for its pleasant groves and its Venus priestesses and hierodules even more so.

5 Trier. Prefect of the Gentis Germanorum = commander of the Germanic Foreign Legion. (Auxiliary peoples).

After your camp experiences at Carnuntum and your edifying devotions at the Mausoleum Sylvani there, the Numidian Venus service will certainly provide you, sweet little girl, with the desired diversion. Farewell to you!"

Palphurnius had written.

"Now give me the letter, most faithful of secret writers," said the emperor and rose carelessly from his bed.

Gallienus read the letter again with obvious pleasure. Then he folded it himself, closed it carefully and tucked the letter into the folds of his robe after writing on it with his own hand:

"Caesar Gallienus semper Augustus to Domina Galliena through his reliable personal aide Bonitus."

Gallienus left the chamber to send Bonitus as an express messenger to Domina Galliena in Rome.

Palphurnius, however, grimaced and said to himself:

"This is to be a message for my friend Sabellus in Rome. I am eager to hear what effect my last letter to the Acta Diurna had on our future empress. You have to be clever, said Venerianus, so Sabellus doesn't know that the letter is from me. You have to be clever. - Palphurnius, be clever too!"

Seventh Adventure

Galliena Learned the Message in Rome

“Tired words, wasted sighs, friend, in our times!" A man with a large retinue of slaves had said this to his friend walking next to him. He, too, had an equally large retinue of slaves behind him. The purple hem of the stately folded togas of the two testified to their consular rank. - "No Caesar had ever dared to do such a thing, friend Marcus Claudius Tacitus!" the other consul had replied. "To elevate a bear-skin woman to Augusta and insult our daughters like that! Jupiter Altor and Mars Ultor are not powerful enough to avenge such abuse!" - "Your word, friend, is strong!" Senator Tacitus had said to the legionary prefect Lucius Aelianus. - "Yes, friend Tacitus, my word is strong, and rightly so. Of course, Cornelius Tacitus is not my great-grandfather and I therefore have nothing to do with "Germania", that accursed book. If it were not necessary for you, Tacitus, you too would have many a three-edged word in your arsenal!"

"Aelianus, how unwise! What do I care about a book that my great-grandfather happened to write one hundred and fifty-seven years ago! What do I care about the deliberate misapplication of his words!"

"But a mad emperor leans on his word; elevates a barbarian peasant wench to empress, to Caesarina, to Augusta! Rome, run with rage!"

They walked silently along the Via Nomentana towards the Forum Romanum. At the golden milestone, the center of the world, they stopped.

The Italian blue arched its crystalline dome over them. The evening sunlight glowed on the temples and imperial palaces of the Palatine to the left; to the right, the sharp outlines of the Capitol stood out in the violet-

dark shadows. In the gloomy twilight lay the Gemmonian staircase.

"Here at the golden Groma I want to say it again, friend Tacitus, that Rome has never been so insulted as now in the thousand years in which it has sat in judgment here on this square over all kings and peoples, over the whole world. And now I ask you, here at the center of the world, whether you do not agree with my opinion that the traitor to Rome should be thrown down from the Gemonian staircase, who dares to introduce that barbarian harlot there into those halls of the gods of the Palatine, to introduce her as empress!"

"And yet, friend Aelianus," said Tacitus with dignified calmness to his violently agitated friend, "and yet the emperor has great merits: think of Ravenna!"

But the other blurted out angrily:

"And if he had remained without victory, and if the Alemanni had run over Rome, and if the Alemanni had plundered Rome, and if he had burned it, indeed if Gallienus had married a plebeian, even the dirtiest proletarian, who smells of garlic and the mortar dish, - Rome would have borne this misfortune with dignity, Rome would have forgiven its emperor; the marriage with the Germanic woman, the bride purchased with a whole province -! That is too bad...! Jupiter Ultor, where are your shattering projectiles!"

Tacitus was unable to reassure his friend. Then another distinguished Roman approached them from the Arch of Severus. It was a man barely thirty years old who was walking unaccompanied towards the two men, who were already more than fifty.

"Salvete Commilitones!" he called out to them cheerfully; "are you dining at Martianus' tonight? Rare things are being offered to you there; little Merita and the lovely Chloe and many other singers and dancers have been invited. Martianus is not as stingy as Caesar Gallienus, who only lets his guests bathe with old women while he keeps the pretty ones for himself. You should be there!"

"I intend to be there," Tacitus replied, not a little pleased to see the unpleasant conversation with Aelianus interrupted. But he remained silent;

he was too angry.

"And you are silent, respectable comrade?" the young Roman turned to Aelianus, "have you perhaps swallowed a spider?"

"Don't do that, Cecropius! It's more evil than swallowing ten spiders -"

But Cecropius, as the last to arrive was called, pretended to respond to his symposium colleague's bad mood and said with mischievous seriousness:

"Yes, now I know what's troubling your mind! The temple of Saturn has done it to you because you feel sorry for the children he eats. Yes, yes, but this Saturn is actually called Roma, and his children are the state treasure that is guarded there in the Saturnus Temple!"

"By Mars Ultor! Leave me alone!" cried Aelianus discontentedly, while Tacitus smiled softly at Cecropius' biting joke. He was acting like a wise man. "Moderation in all things," was his saying.

But Cecropius continued with indestructible eloquence:

"Well, friend and drinking companion, if that is not what has enraged you so violently, then only the fate of the literary man Sabellus, whom they have just thrown into the Mamertinum dungeon, can have shaken you so violently. You know, this is the same state room that the Senate of Rome once assigned to the African king Jugurtha, who is said to have cried out when he was lowered there: "By Hercules, what a cool bath! Is that it, fellow students?"

Then both friends took notice and shouted as if from the same mouth.

"What are you saying, Cecropius? The author of the Acta Diurna[1] in the dungeon? Why?"

"He is said to have lied," said the questioned man with his smile.

"By the three-headed Hecate!" cried Aelianus, "more likely he has written the truth, for if he had been sent to Mamertinus' dungeon at the first lie, he would have been there for countless consulships, and we would no

1 The Acta Diurna was a written newspaper that to a certain extent served as what we now call journalism for the Romans. It was written by many slaves at the same time according to dictation. Its content corresponded in a certain sense to that of today's newspapers, as the gossip of the capital was spread in it. Municipal affairs, scandalous trials, Senate resolutions, imperial decrees here and there, events in the imperial and other famous families, births, deaths, marriages, honors and promotions, then fires, accidents, provincial news and curiosities. The Acta Diurna did not deal with actual politics, which was reserved for book literature.

longer know what the Acta Diurna even looked like. What was it?"

Cecropius had a fine smile for an answer and these words in a whisper:

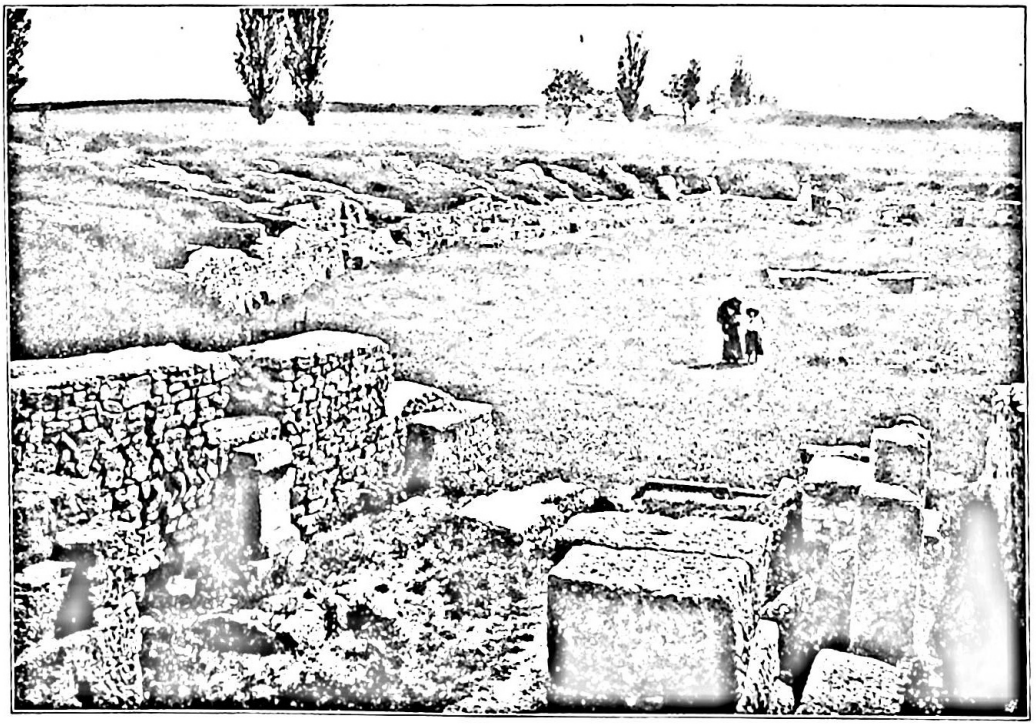
"Come with me, fellow students, to Martianus. I have saved a sheet of the Acta Diurna from being burned, and I will read it to you there and to others who want to hear it. It will perhaps cool your anger somewhat, Aelianus; it is finely, very finely written. Poor Sabellus!"

The senator Tacitus and the legionary prefect Aelianus sent their troops home and each ordered a lantern bearer to the rich Martianus' palace on the Via Flaminia, next to the Mausoleum Augusti, at midnight. But Cecropius laughed and said that these poor rascals would be better off sleeping at home, because after sunrise no one needed a lantern, but possibly a sedan chair. And Martianus had plenty of those for his friends. So the palanquins and the lantern bearer were ordered to be cautious and well-mannered.

The three friends now walked through the breakthrough made by Emperor Trajan, who had dug out the ridge that connected the Mons-Quivinals with the Capitol and had the wall of Servius Tullius torn down in order to connect the old city with the new district on the Field of Mars. There they walked past Trajan's Column, across the Forum of Trajan, along the Via Flaminia, past Antonius' Column, past gleaming marble palaces until they reached that of the rich Martianus.

It was a huge building with a pillared portico and many a magnificent marble statue. In the atrium, the rich Martianus sat on an ivory bisellium to await his guests. He greeted Senator Tacitus with lively joy. Distinguished guests are greeted with loud shouts of joy to show how familiar they are with the famous man. The legionary prefect was greeted no less loudly. Cecropius, on the other hand, had to make do with a very benevolent and condescending greeting. He was young, distinguished but not rich, but of a pleasant nature and had not insignificant prospects for the future. Reason enough to treat him as a friend; with all due caution, of course. Cecropius thought it best to pretend that he did not feel this cool friendliness. The other guests also belonged to society, at least to the patrician or knightly class.

In total, including the host, there were only nine fellow diners. Only a



Carnuntum: Ruins of the arena, between Deutsch-Altenburg and Petronell in Lower Austria. Reproduced with permission from Kunstverlag Reiffenstein in Vienna.

Book 1, Chapter Six, Page 107.

small, intimate banquet was to be held, for the number nine was the rich Martianus' favorite number, because of the muses, as he said.

In addition to these eight guests, numerous famous singers and dancers were also present, but the host did not apply his number system to them, presumably because one can never have too much beauty in front of one's eyes.

After a cursory greeting, Cecropius pulled Martianus aside and whispered to him that he had important news that was not for everyone's ears. So the four of them retired to the library. An important preliminary meeting for the Senate, the other guests had been told.

The four friends were sitting there. Cecropius pulled a papyrus scroll out of his pocket and read:

"Incredible things can be reported about the laurel-crowned victor before Ravenna. Instead of destroying or at least pursuing the enemies of his homeland, he went to Pannonia to join Caesar Valerianus, who had marched against the rebellious Ingenus. However, Caesar Gallienus was idle there, hanging around in taverns and cookshops, becoming a bosom friend of bawlers and wine merchants, gladiators and circus coachmen. He had shed his Romanity to such an extent that on his journey to Achaia he had even allowed himself to be admitted to Athens as a citizen of the city, and had then been initiated into the secrets of becoming an archon. Yes, he even intended to be admitted to the Areopagus itself..."

"Outrageous!" cried Aelianus.

"I cannot condemn it," said the senator Tacitus calmly. "Even if I do not find much to praise in this action, I am grateful for the victory at Ravenna. The nature of the army may not have allowed him to pursue the barbarians. The Goths and the Scythians also threaten in the east; I think it wise for him to seek Achaia's favor. But it is hateful that he should be blamed for what all emperors have done, what we all do. Sabellus deserves his dungeon!"

"Granted, senator! But listen further! You know the rule of the rhetors, which requires a well-founded introduction; we have not yet gone beyond that!"

Martianus said this and beckoned Cecropius to continue reading:

"It is well known what care Gallienus took with everything that had nothing in common with the government. No well-meaning Roman can fail to notice how he had his table stocked with fortresses of rare fruits at times of the year when these fruits were not in the habit of growing. His ambition was to have melons in winter, grapes in spring and cider all year round, while the enemies of the empire gnawed at the borders like mice."

"That is the merit of the imperial gardener, but not the disgrace of Gallienus; Lucullus is praised for this and more!" The senator said this almost unwillingly.

"His towels are made of gold cloth, his polake of gold, set with precious stones, he powders his hair with gold dust and appears in public in the provinces with a crown of rays..."

"That's less of a crime than Sabellus' donkey ears; he deserves to go to jail."

"...and in a purple cloak, its agraffe flickering with precious stones. All this was done to the disgrace of Rome, for what emperor ever wore a garment other than the toga, what Caesar ever wore a headdress other than the laurel wreath? He also wore purple pants trimmed with gold and a tunic with long sleeves of purple cloth. His coat of arms and even his boots were covered with jewels. The fact that he bathes six or seven times a day in summer, but three times a day in winter, is less reprehensible..."

"Such accusations are ludicrous, and instead of throwing Sabellus in the dungeon, I would have had him whipped severely and had donkey ears sewn to his own; he would have had to wear them while dictating his Acta Diurna!"

The honest Tacitus had talked himself into zeal, and yet he was nothing less than a friend of Gallienus. Martianus and Aelianus, however, urged Cecropius to continue reading.

Similar accusations continued to pile up for a good while, vividly reminiscent of the foul-smelling projectiles still thrown by Chinese pirates today. At last, however, came the main blow, which was only prepared by what had been said before. Cecropius therefore read more slowly and with malicious emphasis.

"But in order to extend the misfortune of the empire to the utmost, this blinded emperor fell in love with a slave girl and the paramour of the Germanic chieftain Attalus to such an extent that he gave away the entire provinces of Pannonia and Noricum, including Valeria, for the possession of this unclean, foul-smelling cattle maid. That which had been won and maintained with our fathers' blood in a struggle of nearly three hundred years, the possession of rich lands, flourishing colonies and municipalities, the path to Oceanus Germanicus as well as to Suevicum Mare, was given away for the embrace of a barbarian cow milker. Thus the sublime name of Caesar is profaned, the radiant name of Augustus deified; thus all Rome is deeply offended and all Roman virgins and women defiled by this imperial atrocity. Only hecatombs of hecatombs can reconcile the goddesses Roma and Venus, and human blood must also flow as atonement. Jupiter Ultor and Mars Ultor, you two gods of vengeance, hear this accusation against the Emperor of Rome!"

Cecropius paused.

"Well? What do you gentlemen say to that? But wait, there are even smaller messages; it says right away: "A letter from Sabaria says that Caesar Gallienus's bride is the most unworthy creature ever to shine upon the sun. Until now she had only roamed about in cattle sheds, where the manure heap was her usual bed, on which she embraced anyone who cared to do so. She is said to have no idea whatsoever about footwear and clothing, for apart from a few tattered skins, which serve to cover her in addition to the dirt, she has no possessions other than her ugliness, which is only surpassed by her presumptuous insolence. This is what the future Empress of Rome looks like today!" And down there, friends, is a message from Carnuntum: "Last week, the future empress is said to have taken her first bath; an attempt to trim the nails on her fingers and toes is said to have failed, as the nails have completely grown into the flesh. They speak of sorcery, because otherwise one could not believe it. And since..."

"No, that's enough!" cried Tacitus, "that's more than malice! Sabellus deserves his fate, for the lie is too crude! A man of such princely education, a man who is himself a poet, a man who is so famous precisely because of the

beauty of his female slaves, a man who is precisely a Gallienus, such a man cannot love such a noble woman as Sabellus would have us believe! The thing is true, but Caesar's bride must be beautiful and must also have special qualities, otherwise she would not have been able to provoke an emperor of Rome to such an insult of his people! That is my word, the senator Tacitus' word!"

With that, the senator rose noisily from the lectus on which he was sitting. Martianus did not want to let the difference of opinion develop into an argument, so he also stood up and said:

"Our esteemed friend may be right; the monstrosity of what happened is at most explained by that, but it does not excuse it!"

Aelianus wanted to burst out, but with a skillful turn of his body, Martianus had seized him and led him out of the door with amiable friendliness. The others followed.

In the triclinium of the rich Martianus it was pleasantly cool, for the wines were excellent. Martianus had also taken care to banish the deadly boredom from his symposium, which is why he had appointed famous dancers and singers, celebrated beauties of Rome, who had the entire distinguished male world of the world's capital at their feet. The wealthy Martianus could afford to do this.

Even if these "divas" or "graces", as the landlord amiably called them, did not make any claim to the consideration that the custom of the men's world imposed on women, form had to be maintained to some extent, at least to begin with.

That is why no proper "Graeco more bibere", i.e. no formal pub table, was organized today, although it was only the name that was avoided, for in truth it was a real and proper symposium, only without its peculiar ceremonial.

The divas appeared in rich Greek costume, which was very popular because of the many liberties it allowed.

Nor did they act anything less than shy. They lay with a casual grace in the cushions around the bar table and were distributed in such a way that one of the guests on the right and one on the left had one of the graces as a

neighbor.

Lovely slave girls had wrapped the rosaries around the guests' foreheads and filled the circling goblets again and again.

Little Merita had just sung a song. Loud applause and cheerful laughter showed that she had flattered the taste of the guests of the rich Martianus and had not taken the words of the song from one of Vergilius' idylls.

And yet it was like a thunderstorm over the triclinium. The cheerfulness that usually blazed against these marble walls, that usually swirled around these alabaster columns, did not want to flow today. Brooding over the subject that had been stimulated by the reading of the Acta Diurna, but then abruptly cut off, Aelianus lay in the cushions of the dining bed, for it was not allowed to be discussed here. The legionary prefect, who was usually fond of wine and eager to kiss, drank his cups almost dully and sullenly turned to the drinking companions on either side of him.

Even Tacitus, praised as a Bacchus admirer and Venus worshipper, fared no better. Normally, he would forget Rome and its emperor, senate and quirites in the effervescence of the symposium; today, however, they stung him more deeply. Wordlessly, he too lay in front of his goblet, in which the delicious Cäcuber bubbled, which already numbered more than forty consulates.

But now the senator almost flinched. Little Merita, his comrade on his left, tired of his sullen indifference, which she was not used to from him, daintily adjusted his rosary and remarked with a mischievous smile:

"You are, after all, one of the venerable fathers of the Senate, so tell me, are you not also pleased with the Emperor's marriage?"

"Pleased for me, little fool? And why?" Tacitus raised the cup to hide his astonished expression behind it.

"Why?" laughed the little girl, turning on her bed so that her head came to lie under the senator's face and she had to look up at him with her fiery, shining coal eyes. "Why? - Well, I'm happy because now I can become empress too! You only have to be young and beautiful! How wonderful!"

"Well, you're young and beautiful, Merita," said the senator, "but how could you become empress?"

"How, that's a thing of its own! Your proud dominatrixes grow old; we don't. We are like plucked flowers that quickly wither; these are like potted plants that are still alive when they fade. If one of us becomes empress and the emperor no longer wants to love her, well, then he orders her to die and another will take her turn; or is it true otherwise?"

With that, Merita played with the purple hem of the senator's toga and wrapped her arm around Tacitus' neck as if in play. But he also had a companion on his right, and she didn't want to be neglected either. She leaned her brown curly head on her right hand, while her left hand played with the senator's thick, short curly hair, which was already beginning to fade. Smiling, she said:

"Now at least you know, merry Tacitus, how this little fool is making things up; she is always thinking of becoming empress, and yet she is blind to the main thing."

"You two are fools!" laughed the senator, "but events are too serious to..."

"I am not joking, venerable Merry One! You know I am a Thessalian and the future is open to me."

"I know it," joked Tacitus, emptying his cup; "you are all sorceresses, like Medea, you pull the moon down to earth and force it to turn a wheel. This is a vain futile game!"

"Well, and if I am not to be empress, do you think you will be?" Merita called over with apparent cheerfulness, while a challenging look touched the Thessalian, who smiled superiorly at this look.

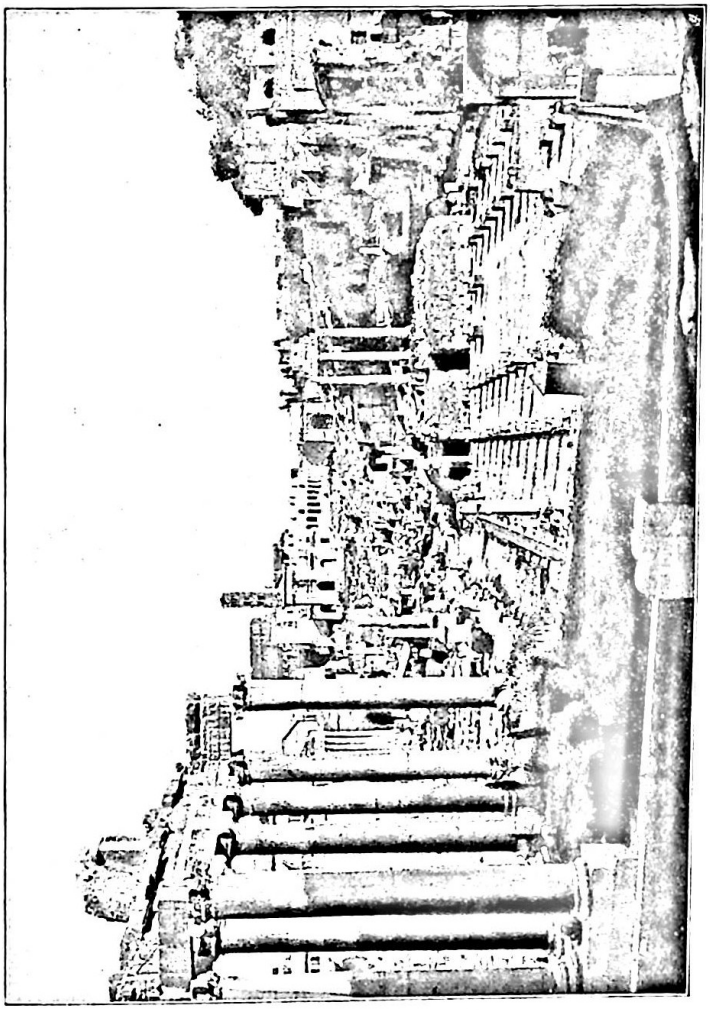
"Don't quarrel, children, and be cheerful; sing me a song, perhaps my cup will fill up again, like the Greek spring at the Helicon."

But Clythia, the Thessalian, seemed to have overheard Tacitus' words, for she replied calmly to Merita's question:

"Me and you, neither of us will be empresses, yet two emperors of the future are our drinking companions today!"

"Two emperors!" exclaimed the senator, his voice trembling with astonishment; "two emperors here in this triclinium?"

“Two emperors! One real and one false; but the real one will win good fame."



Rome: Temple of Saturn, Roman Forum, Colosseum, Arch of Titus, Temple of Castor and Pollux, Palatine Hill. Authorized reproduction with Dr. Hermann Haaß in Berlin.
Book 1, Chapter 7, 117.

That was Clythia's answer.

"And who are the two, Thessalian Pythia?" urged Tacitus, but Clythia clasped his neck, her glowing breath played around his forehead and the words crept into his ear in a whisper:

"Remember the word of the Thessalian, she must say no more, but a sign the gods can give you to recognize and distinguish the two."

"A sign, and today?" the senator asked excitedly, "and what sign?" he wanted to ask, but the Greek woman had embraced him and pressed a hot kiss to his lips.

“That is the seal; now be silent, venerable one, beloved!”

But the other Symposium members also felt the pressure, so Cecropius suggested electing the Arbiter Convivii to hold an “a summo bibere”; the suggestion was well received and Aelianus was elected “Rex” or “Arbiter Convivii”.

“The signs are beginning, keep your eyes open, dearest!” whispered Clythia in the ear of the astonished senator, while Merita, singing a little song, cheered the new president of the pub table.

Martianus had arranged the election of the rex. His aim was to encourage the taciturn Aelianus to be more cheerful and, like the others, to chase away his gloomy thoughts. Aelianus took this dignity just as seriously as if he had been ordered by the emperor to head the government of a province as procurator.

“And so I will be your Rex and pub president, dear fellow students! Let the round chant rise to “a summo bibere”!

The chant quickly roared through the columned hall at the command of Rex Aureolus. Anacreontic verses had been sung; the sounds of flutes, harps and citharas accompanied the singing. A group of dancers, lightly clad, hopped into the hall to give the Symposium the right consecration with a bacchic dance.

“Evoe! To Bacchus be the drink, to Bacchos, Evoe, the breaker of sorrows!” the revelers cheered. The bacchanal girls circled the pub table in a merry dance step. Then it happened that one of them stumbled and fell in front of the seat where Tacitus was lying. He jumped up to help the girl and

in doing so lost his wreath of roses. But she quickly jumped up and pressed the wreath onto the senator's curls, from which it had slipped; she also wanted to adorn herself with the wreath she had lost. Then she was startled, for she had mixed up the wreaths. But the drinking companions had not missed this mix-up of the wreaths either: “Bacchos, let him live! Vivat Bacchos, pereat Rex!” resounded in the circle, and before Tacitus knew what had happened, he had a Thyrsos in his hands and was seized by his cheerful fellow students and carried ahead of the Bacchos procession into the peristylium, where the others cheeringly followed.

“Do you know the sign?” Clythia had whispered to the senator when he was abducted from her side.

Rex Aelianus, so ignominiously abandoned, had remained alone in the triclinium in front of his cup, which he now drank thoughtfully. Martianus arrived in dismay, worried that his guest might misinterpret what had happened. But the prefect was convinced that it had happened by chance, without malicious intent, due to an exuberant drinking mood, and followed him into the peristyle.

It was refreshingly cool there. Diana's silver hounds gleamed in the dark night sky, and the goddess's forehead ornament shone down with mild light on the gardens of the spacious peristylium.

Colorful lamps illuminated the room with changing light, there glaringly illuminating a group, there not penetrating the shadows that darkened the peristyle behind myrtle and laurel bushes or a group of slender cypresses. There the flutes and citharas continued to resound, the cheers of the bacchantes and the revelers who had become bacchantes.

The delicious wines flowed in torrents and Tacitus-Bacchos was enthroned in the midst of the boisterous crowd.

The bacchantes, clad only in panther skins, no longer allowed the already half-drunk revellers to endure the shackles of a symposium, or even the restraints of being in a group. Even Tacitus-Bacchus had forgotten to think about Clythia's prophetic words in the general sensory frenzy, and lay on the Thessalian's chest, breathing fervently...

_____

"Rome is a pestilential muddy soil, where the plants of wild desires sprout en masse, where swarms of secret braggarts, arrogant courtiers, sweet-talkers, flatterers, bandits, hereditary sneaks and false friends roam; only he who loves only riches, is enchanted by gold, and measures happiness only by purple, power and influence, only he who has never tasted true freedom, never seen the truth, but has grown up among flatterers and slaves; furthermore, those who have consecrated their whole being to the service of lust, who are friends of debauched dining, wine and love, and who take pleasure in vain jugglery and deceitful lies, and who, finally, are delighted only with tinkling and trills and lewd songs: Rome is the right abode for such people. "

Lucianos of Samosata pronounces this most devastating judgment in a single sentence in his "Nigrinus" on Caesarian Rome.

****

High above this swampy Rome, on one of the seven hills, on the Palatine Hill, stood the golden imperial palaces, the witnesses of many a heroic deed, of so many cursed, unsurpassable vices. Even in these splendid rooms, the news of the Caesar's choice of bride had deeply stirred people's emotions.

Domina Galliena lay on a gilded bed of rest. In her company were several other noble ladies, who sat around her on chairs with colorful embroidered cushions or walked in groups between the gleaming columns of the high chamber, chatting.

Some cute slave girls scurried through the rows of guests with refreshments, while others played various musical instruments. Menophila, the nurse, and Cora, the princess's favorite slave, sat apart, watching and waiting for Galliena's beckoning.

"You are too excited, princess!" said Lygda, the senator Sabinillus' wife. "Tired from your journey, you should get some rest."

"I can only rest when a fish in the Adriatic has married this barbarian

maiden!"

She shot angry glances around the pillared hall; the ladies tried in vain to persuade Galliena to withdraw. But Galliena had only been in Rome for a few hours and she wanted to find out the mood of the capital. Before the sower sows the seed, he must fertilize and plough if the seed is not to perish. But before he plows, he must not forget to test the soil to see if the plowing is worthwhile. So the princess asked and the ladies told what they knew, of course in colors that corresponded to the mood of the angry domina.

Today, in what was certainly a rare occurrence, the princess's ladies spoke what they felt without restraint, for wounded vanity had turned them all into blind enemies of the Germanic king's daughter.

A slave girl scurried in and whispered something to Cora. She bent a knee to her mistress. A questioning look from the princess made her say:

"Mistress and patron goddess of the imperial house! At this unusual hour, several matrons, honorable wives of Roman citizens, have appeared here in the golden house and ask for the grace to be heard by you."

"Let them come!" said the princess. A crowd of women of different ages entered. They were simple middle-class women who came here to represent the people of Rome. They entered timidly, almost overwhelmed by the princely pomp that surrounded them. Huddled together like a flock of sheep, they stood there, one hiding behind the other, making embarrassed faces.

Then the dominatrix addressed them:

"Greetings, women of the Quirites! What brings you to me?"

But there was no answer, the courage had left the entrants. Those who had spoken and shouted so bravely just an hour ago were now barely able to think of what they had set themselves to say.

"Now, you good matrons," the princess began, "you cannot all speak, but name one of you and I will help her to present your wish to me. So which one of you will be the speaker?"

The women shouted:

"It's Celia, let Celia speak!"

"So, Celia, come before me and tell your fellow citizens what you want."

She stepped forward. She was an ugly old woman, and it was plain to see

Long live Bacchus! Vivat Bacchus, pereat Rex!
Book I, Chapter 7, Page 131.

that she was usually very eloquent and more accustomed to scolding than praising. But now she was still silent, although she stood before the princess. She was frightened by the fact that her companions had withdrawn like the chorus at the theater behind the actor.

"So speak, good woman, if I can help, let it be done. If you are hungry, I will help you!"

"You know that, high goddess! The Quirites are always hungry, but we don't come to the Palatinus because of hunger; other things bring us here, goddess!"

"So say it, can I help, let it be done; but make it short."

"Goddess, you must know that, and that is why we ask whether it is true that the emperor marries the slave of a barbarian peasant who has no shirt on her body and does not know what a tunic is. That's what we want to know and that's why we're asking you, goddess."

"You have not been lied to, good women; but do not ask me, the grief-stricken one! Do not ask me about the disgrace of Roman womanhood, which my own fiancé has brought upon it! Is the sacred flame still burning in the temple of Vesta? I would not be surprised if it were extinguished! Let me mourn, good women! Mourn, not for my betrothed's unfaithfulness to me, but for the emperor's unfaithfulness to you! And yet it behooves us not to use force against him, for he is the emperor, the worldly god! I would never expect you, guardians of Roman women's virtue, to drag the rejected woman from her chariot when she enters Rome and tear her to pieces. I would never advise you to do so, for she is Caesar's bride and will become Augusta! Listen, the peasant maid, the barbarian cowmaid will become Domina Augusta! Yes, your empress! The foul-smelling bear-skinner will become the first, most noble woman in the world, your mistress! Good, virtuous Quirite women, do you not tremble with rage? - And yet, yet! - She will be the deified wife of your deified emperor! - I will not expect you to give her, the wicked one, the deathblow! I will not implore Zeus Altor to crush her, for I am the unfortunate base of the deluded one!"

Sighs and tears stifled the voice of the good actress in the prince's cloak. The Quirite women stood before the weeping princess, intimidated and yet

enraged. They had never seen a princess in tears before: and this princess was so good!

Hesitating, trembling with restrained fury and yet as if she wanted to comfort, Celia said:

"This cannot be true, goddess! The whole of Rome is beside itself, and so are we women, that such an ungrown thing should become the first Roman woman. We are honest Roman women, simple matrons, and so we thought it would be better if you, goddess, became Caesar's wife and our Caesaress."

Then the princess had changed color and clutched her heart with her right hand.

"Juno pronuba has decreed otherwise, contrary to all oracles; it behooves us humans to submit to the will of the gods. Therefore, good women, go in peace to your flocks, whose priestesses you are, and let fate fulfill itself."

"No, goddess, we don't want that!" cried Celia, growing bolder and waving her hand.

"We don't want that!" cried the chorus of women. This gave the speaker more courage; she stepped closer to the princess and called out:

"No again! The princes have made you empress and the princes must not be acted against. That would bring disaster. You must become Caesaress."

"Go, good women, go! If this is what the auspices demand, then it will happen sooner or later, for the gods rule over men. Go each to her flock and take each of you a golden Gallienus coin as a memento. But go, that's all I can tell you."

The Quiritinnen left the pillared chamber, more agitated than when they had entered; it was still unclear to them what they wanted, but Galliena's evil seed had not fallen on barren ground. The golden Gallienus coins were the fertilizer.

Galliena lay in the pillows of Lektus for a long time, brooding gloomily. Then a soft hand lay comfortingly on her head. She raised her eyelashes:

"Good Lygda, you wake me from dreams..."

"Exalted princess! Think no more of the faithless!"

The senator's wife said this intending to offer comfort. But Galliena sprang up like a viper: almost startled, Lygda recoiled. Galliena's eyes glinted

menacingly and she was furious:

"Who speaks of a faithless man! What do I care for his love and he for mine? He may kiss the maiden as often as he likes, but she must not rob me of my purple! Oh, if I had real friends, I would not have to be afraid of this slave girl!"

Again her eyes flashed with the light of a tiger.

Lydga staggered back pale.

Galliena had saluted her coolly with her head and rushed out of the portico.

In a small room, the princess had consulted with Menophile, her former nurse.

Galliena was also a child of her time and therefore superstitious. Nor had she spoken seriously when she said that she only wanted the purple. She could not bear the thought of having to stand back from the barbarian. So she decided to do as her nurse had advised her. Gallienus should languish at her feet, beg for her love, then? - then - ?! - then she would push him away with her foot!

*****

Night had fallen.

Half the moon stood high between the shining stars. A cool breeze blew in from the countryside and swept through the streets of the golden Roma, heated by the heat of the day.

Two female figures, clad in gray hooded cloaks, scurried along the Via Flaminia, past the Mausoleum Augusti and out of shining Rome.

The two women continued a good distance beyond the Porta Flaminia, walking silently between the silent yet eloquent tombs. The white marble temples, obelisks, pyramids and gravestones stood out against the dark, leafy background.

Shivering, the two pilgrims wrapped themselves more tightly in their cloaks and quickened their steps.

Now a narrow side path on the right led between pine trees towards a

small hill. The trees were thicker. A reddish glow of fire became visible in the branches; it came from the open door of a small cottage.

The two women wanted to enter, but one of them seemed to waver; she pressed her left hand against her chest and covered her forehead with her right, as if she didn't know what to do.

“Dearest child, be brave! It will soon be midnight, and then it will be too late! Come, come, little doll of a heart!”

And with that, Mena took the princess's hand and pulled her into the little house. Reluctantly and yet unwillingly, she followed her guide. A small room surrounded her.

All around the sooty walls, various frightening objects stared down at those who entered; dried snakes, newts and lizards here, animal heads and skulls there. In between, tufts of herbs, knives, logs, pots full of creeping worms. An owl sat with glowing lights in one corner, in the other a huge black cat; a raven and a magpie, however, sat in deep sleep on the top bar of the vault. In the middle of the room stood a huge hearth; over its flame hung in chains the steaming cauldron.

The two women stood in the entrance, silent and shaken with fear. Bathed in the flickering red light, the magic apparatus of the magic kitchen seemed to be constantly turning and transforming; the pine trunks in front of the door also resembled fire snakes lurking in the bushes, ready to pounce.

“Who disturbs the magical activities of the Thessalian Clynico at this midnight hour?”

These words now struck the ears of the two women; an old woman in a black robe and fluttering silver hair with snakes coiled in it stood before them. Suddenly she had appeared, neither of them had seen her coming. They stood spellbound, dumbfounded, unable to utter a word, facing the abomination.

She raised her scrawny arm, brandishing a black staff, threateningly towards the princess and called out in a shrill voice:

“Nec Babylonios tentaris numeros!”[2]

2 Don't try Babylonian magic numbers!

This intimidated the women completely; how did the sorceress know their thoughts? Galliena tried to speak. But her tongue failed her. The terrible woman raised her wand again and shrieked:

“Cypris, the mistress of the sharpest arrows, wove the multicolored bird Jynx indissolubly on the four-spoked wheel, brought down from heaven the mad bird first to men, and she taught the wise Asonidas pleading magic songs, so that he might banish the divine Medea's shyness before her parents and the yearning Hellas might whirl her heart, inflamed with love, with Peitho's whip!”

But again and again, the terrible woman made circles and signs in the air with her wand towards those standing on the threshold. They were completely confused; they did not understand the meaning, hardly the words of the magic formulas. Now the old woman withdrew into the magic kitchen and beckoned them to follow her. She pulled out a scroll of parchment from the black staff, which was tightly written in strange, illegible script, and twirled it around her head. Walking backwards, she circled the hearth; the two women followed her silently and shuddered as she walked around. Then the sorceress began again.

"This scroll, Clynicos, which carries the man far across the seas, even to your chamber to draw your beloved, the power, colored by gold, from flaming Amethystos healing glow, be a precious gift to you, Cypris!"

She then threw the scroll into the steaming cauldron, and Galliena, who had already been informed in advance by her nurse, threw a handful of golden gallienas and then a second handful of violet-colored amethysts into the cauldron. The magician's whole body trembled with greed to soon lift the rich treasure that was now sitting in the magic cauldron. Now followed incantations and horrible spells in heavy quantities, so that pale fear clutched at the women's hearts. At last the spell was finished. The sorceress handed the princess an amulet of inconspicuous appearance. It was made of red wax and was said to possess unsurpassable virtues and powers. Then the old woman said with solemn dignity in the language of the princess:

"Remember Clynico's spell! Remember the magic that has the power to draw the man from far across the seas, even to your chamber to your

beloved; remember, exalted one, the magic with a gentle, giving hand!"

Galliena and her guide hurriedly left the richly endowed sorceress.

Midnight had long since passed. The moon was low. Over the gray twilight of the Sabine Mountains lay the faint scent of amber, the first harbinger of dawn.

Silent and shivering, the two women hurried through the gloomy rows of tombs towards the Porta Flaminia. In the dim, uncertain light of dawn, the Mausoleum Augusti stood before their hurried gaze as the mighty gates of a marble palace opened.

A crowd of revellers mixed with naked bacchantes and unclothed bacchantes rolled out of this gate with wild shouting and drunken jeering. The two had noticed the mob too late and there was no longer any question of hiding.

"Hold us Venus and Bacchos! Two vestal virgins he leads to us! Salvete, you beautiful ladies, there's still room for both of you in our train!"

One of the crowd shouted and, swaying in his gait, pushed his way towards the two nocturnal shifters. The rosary hung disheveled in his tangled curls, soiled, displaced, torn, the robe fluttered around his half-covered body. In a drunken rage, he tore the hood off Mena's head.

"Let me kiss you, little dove, come to Cecropious's heart!" he shouted, but Mena pushed him away. Others came to his aid, and things were already threatening to go badly for the two of them, had not the senator Tacitus stood up with all his dignity at the right time to let the two dominas go their way unmolested.

Nevertheless, he feared that he would not be able to quell the storm, so he offered his palanquin to the ladies.

The bacchantes surrounded the palanquin with drunken noise when Tacitus, with a tongue heavy with wine, asked where the slaves were to carry it.

"To the Palatinus, Galliena is my name!"

This had a sobering effect on the good senator. "Back off, Bacchantes! Give way to Galliena, the princess!"

This call brought the drunkards to their senses. They staggered to one

side and the palanquin set off towards the imperial palaces. The gate opened and Tacitus left the princess there after a respectful greeting.

In the imperial palace, however, Bonitus was already waiting for the princess. He handed her the letter and escorted her to the carriage, which took Galliena to Ostia without delay. A ship was already waiting there to sail on to Africa.

But Tacitus had no idea that this would be his last encounter with Galliena.

The sun rose with glowing splendor over golden Rome, the imperial palaces shone unchanged from the Palatinus.